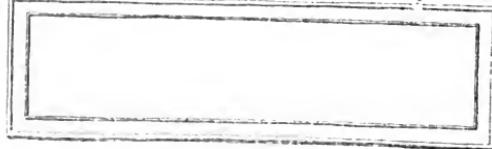
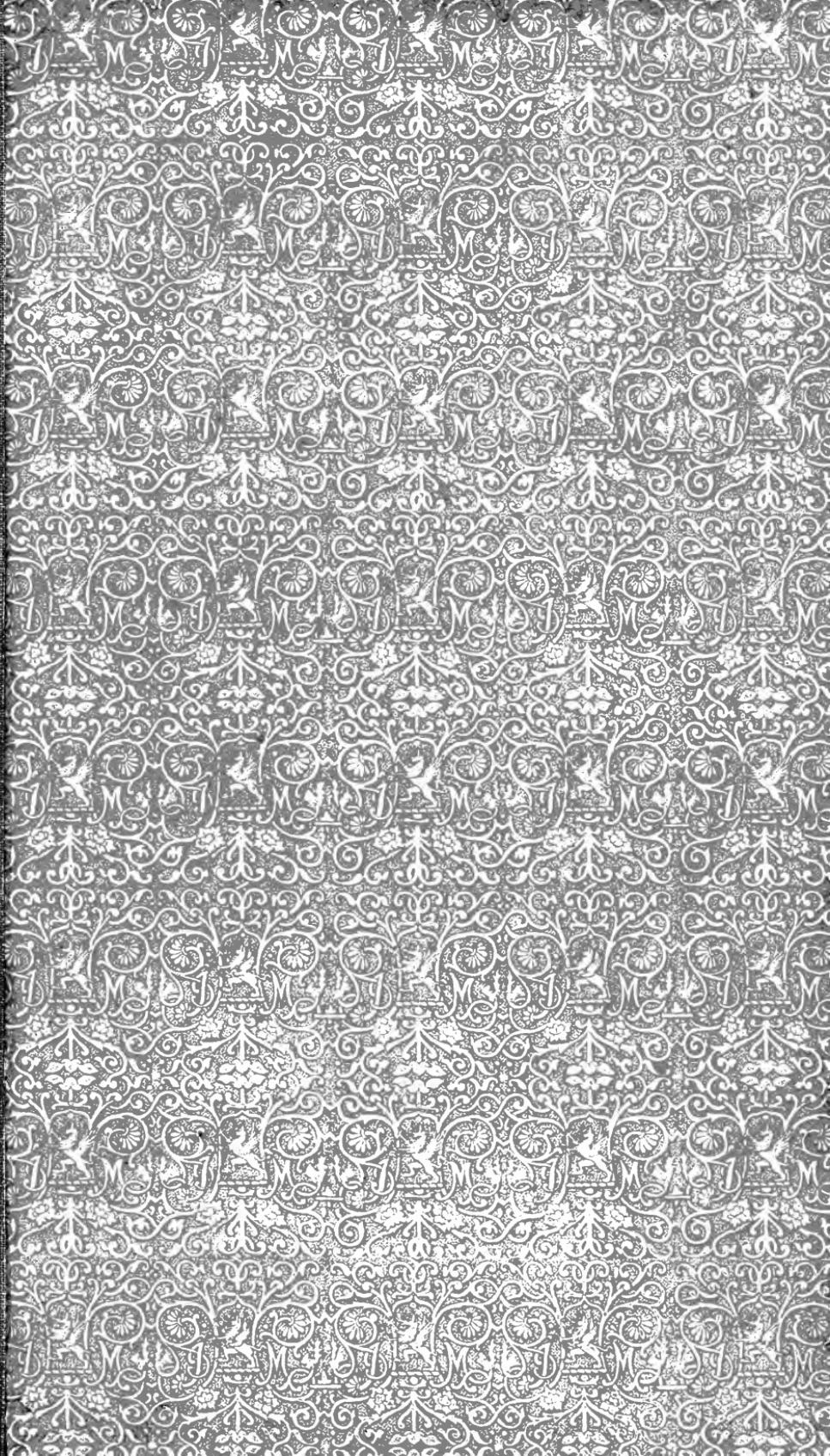


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HORACE W. CARPENTIER





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369

369
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317

THE EASTERN QUESTION

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THE
EASTERN QUESTION

SPEECHES DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS
BY WILLIAM FREDERICK, LORD STRATHEDEN
AND CAMPBELL, 1871—1891

LONDON, 1894

BY HALLIBURTON, STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL

EDITED BY HIS EXECUTORS
HALLYBURTON, LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL
THE HON. FRANCIS LAWLEY
AND
CECIL COWPER,
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1894

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MANUFACTURED

Carpentier

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE present collection of the speeches of the late Lord Stratheden and Campbell upon the Eastern Question is the result of a suggestion made by the late Lord Ampthill. In the course of several visits to Berlin between 1874 and 1878 (the period beginning with the Insurrection in the Herzegovina and ending with the Treaty of Berlin), Lord Stratheden had many opportunities of submitting to Lord Ampthill the opinions he had formed upon British policy in the East, enforced in the speeches contained in this volume. Lord Ampthill—whose mastery of diplomacy and European policy was universally admitted—was so impressed with the sound views and extensive knowledge displayed in Lord Stratheden's speeches, that he urged him to publish them in a collected form.

With such a witness to their value, the Editors, in carrying out the testamentary duty imposed upon them by the late Lord Stratheden, feel that it would be quite out of place for them to add any remarks of their own upon the importance of the speeches which they now place before the public. They desire, however, to point out that it should always

be remembered, to the honour of the late Lord Stratheden, that he expounded the policy suggested by the most successful traditions of the British Foreign Office, as laid down by Lord Palmerston, and did so at a period when a party had arisen vehemently opposed to our ancient lines of foreign policy—a party whose new and extravagant views were working the gravest detriment to British influence and authority in the Councils of Europe.

STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL.

F. C. LAWLEY.

CECIL COWPER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TREATY OF PARIS, 1856. Motion for an Address	I
TURKEY AND EASTERN EUROPEAN POWERS. Question—Observations	10
GREAT BRITAIN, AUSTRIA AND FRANCE—TREATIES OF VIENNA (1815) AND PARIS (1856). Address for Copies	13
THE IDENTIC NOTE TO THE OTTOMAN PORTE, ETC. Resolution .	19
RAILWAY BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF. Question—Observations	34
TURKEY—THE BERLIN MEMORANDUM. Observations	36
TURKEY—TREATIES OF 1856. Resolution	42
TURKEY. Address for a Paper	55
TURKEY.—THE TREATIES OF 1856—1871. Motion for an Address .	60
TURKEY. Address for Documents	71
RUSSIA AND THE PORTE — THE CIRCULAR DESPATCH OF THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT. Motion for Papers	77
THE EASTERN QUESTION—RUSSIA AND THE PORTE. Resolution .	92
RUSSIA AND THE PORTE—THE TREATIES OF 1856 AND 1871. Resolution	102
THE EASTERN QUESTION—RUSSIA AND THE PORTE—THE CONFER- ENCE. Address for Correspondence	120
THE CONGRESS AT BERLIN — THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION. Observations	137
TREATY OF BERLIN—THE BRITISH FLEET. Observations—Question	143
TREATY OF BERLIN, Article 22—OCCUPATION OF BULGARIA AND EASTERN ROUMELIA. Motion for Correspondence	145

	PAGE
TREATY OF BERLIN—EVACUATION OF THE PROVINCES. Motion for an Address	154
TREATY OF BERLIN—THE RUSSIAN EVACUATION OF ROUMELIA AND BULGARIA. Question—Observations	163
TURKEY—THE OTTOMAN ASSEMBLIES. Motion for the Instructions to Mr. Goschen	165
RUSSIA AND THE PORTE—MR. GLADSTONE'S SPEECHES. Motion for a Paper	173
TURKEY AND GREECE—THE FRONTIER QUESTION. Address for Papers	183
TURKEY—SIR A. H. LAYARD, LATE H.M. AMBASSADOR AT THE PORTE	185
GREEK FRONTIER. Address for a Paper	194
TUNIS. Resolution	210
TURKEY—PASSAGE IN THE BOSPHORUS—RUSSIAN ARMED SHIPS. Observations—Question	217
EGYPT (POLITICAL) AFFAIRS. Motion	219
AFFAIRS OF TUNIS. Motion for an Address	221
FOREIGN AFFAIRS — POLICY OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT — TREATY OF 1879 BETWEEN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA. Motion for an Address	228
SUEZ CANAL—CONCESSION TO M. DE LESSEPS. Motion for an Address	242
REUNION OF AUSTRIA, GERMANY AND RUSSIA. Motion for an Address	249
GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA. Address for Papers	263
TURKEY — THE BOSPHORUS AND DARDANELLES — CONVENTION OF PARIS, 1856, AND TREATY OF BERLIN, 1878. Address for Papers	273
BULGARIA—EUROPEAN TURKEY. Motion for an Address for Further Papers on the Late Events in European Turkey	281
TURKEY—BULGARIA	288
TURKEY AND THE EASTERN QUESTION. Address for Papers	295

May 15th, 1871.

TREATY OF PARIS, 1856.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD CAMPBELL rose to call attention to the Protocols of Conferences held in London respecting the Treaty of March 30th, 1856, and to move for any consular reports of the steps which the Russian Government are taking to form the maritime and military arsenals which Clause 13 had prohibited.

The noble Lord said he would, in the first place, point to the fact that a debate of some kind on that subject was inevitable. The Protocols upon the Conference had been delivered before Easter, and it was necessary that a short interval should follow to give the Opposition time, if they deemed fit, to institute a motion. The moment, therefore, was not an improper one for now adverting to the subject.

During the autumn the foreign policy of the Government had been frequently and seriously questioned. The resignation of the Under Secretary (Mr. Otway), because he was not able to defend it, might be regarded as the climax of the discontent it had occasioned. At the same time, he (Lord Campbell) was ready to acquit the Government on some points where the arraignment had been strong, and where, as yet, they had been rather feebly defended. He did not blame them as regarded the origin of the war, or the refusal to interfere during its progress; or the mission of Mr. Odo Russell to Versailles; or even the adoption of the Conference. He would not go along with the more limited assailants who

TO VITAL
ADDITIONS

2

Lord Stratheven's Speeches.

condemned them because the Conference had ended in giving up the best results of the Crimean War, if it could be shown that a *bond-fide*, honourable effort to maintain them had been made. Whether it had or not the Protocols would tell them.

No doubt could exist as to the duty of Great Britain in the Conference—namely, to make a strenuous exertion to preserve the restrictions of the naval power of Russia in the Black Sea, by which the security of Turkey was upheld after the war in the Crimea. It became clear, at least, on these considerations. The noble Earl the Secretary of State, Mr. Odo Russell, and Count Bismarck, all at different times, insisted that the Conference could only be accepted on the condition of perfect freedom to deliberate, perfect freedom to accept, perfect freedom to reject, perfect freedom to reduce or modify the Russian proposition. But, unless there was a real debate before it was embraced, a foregone conclusion would be apparent on the surface, and the Government would be thus condemned by its own language.

Besides that, it was in order to effect a limitation of the Russian naval force in the Black Sea that the second campaign—for there were two distinct campaigns—was undertaken against Russia. The despatch of Lord Clarendon when Turkey was evacuated ; the Conferences at Vienna in 1855, which broke off on this point ; the debates in Parliament which followed ; the terms of pacification Austria threw out, in which these restrictions were included, would all convince impartial minds upon the subject.

The fact was, men differed as to whether it was wise to go into Russian territory, and to convert the war from defence to aggression ; but they agreed as to the object of such a line if it were taken.

There were two great modes of thinking at the period. One held that the war should finish because Turkey was delivered ; the other recommended perseverance in it, that

Turkey might always be secure. None said, "Go into the Crimea for ephemeral and transitory purposes." None said, "Sebastopol ought to be destroyed, that in fifteen years it might rise again, at once a menace and a satire." None said, "We ought, if we land, to leave no traces of our arms, beyond the tombs of those who gloriously carried them." Such a view would have been scouted, by those who leant to peace, for its inhuman recklessness of bloodshed; by those who leant to further sacrifices, for its pusillanimous indifference to the objects further sacrifices might entail.

To effect the limitation of Russian power in the Black Sea it would be correct to say, therefore, that the slopes behind the Alma were ascended, the horrors of Inkerman sustained, and, after efforts which deserved Homeric illustration, Sebastopol eventually taken. To accomplish that result the Earl of Aberdeen was driven from his office to oblivion; the Duke of Newcastle pursued with popular reproaches, until he sought a refuge among the battlefields which he had recently directed; and Lord Palmerston, who had been relegated to a kind of penal servitude in the most obscure offices of the State, became a general dictator.

If in pursuit of that object the British public went on with unflagging zeal and with indomitable spirit, through such heroic feats and perilous vicissitudes, what was the clear duty of those who had to represent it at the Conference? It was to guard the limitation; to array the other Powers in its favour; or, if that was too high a task, to modify and alter, without entirely renouncing it; and, should concession be inevitable, to yield gradually and firmly, like skirmishers retreating on a line, or outposts falling back on an encampment, in such a manner as to show that no alternative was possible. The question to be examined was, how far that duty was fulfilled.

As the Conference met only six times, the examination

needed not to be a long one. On the first day a principle was laid down with regard to the inviolability of treaties, and much credit had been taken for it ; but its reality or hollowness depended entirely on the subsequent proceedings. There was no withdrawal of the Circular of Prince Gortchakoff, by which Europe had been startled, although Mr. Odo Russell had before assumed the necessity of such a measure.

Prussia, at that meeting, distinctly stated her intention to uphold the Russian claim. It was, therefore, with a foregone conclusion that Prussia proposed the Conference and entered it. Everything most decisive appeared in the next Protocol. Russia desired to put an end to the limitation of her naval power in the Black Sea, in terms which showed a conscious weakness in the argument put forward. The only reason given was, that Russia and Turkey were both affected by the limitation in their sovereignty.

But as soon as Turkey, through her Plenipotentiary, insisted on the advantage of the limitation, and disclaimed the indignity connected with it, which must be common to both Powers if it fell on either, the Russian case was seen to vanish altogether. Turkey was ready to give up the limitations if she was alone ; to maintain them if she was supported. Having given her opinion in favour of the Treaty as it stood, she disclaimed responsibility, and left the question for the other Powers to determine.

Great Britain transformed such a hesitating, contingent, and reluctant declaration into "the definite resolution of the Porte," when no such resolution had been hinted at. The other Powers followed the line adopted by the British Representative. The reproach of yielding was thrown by Turkey on the Powers, and by the Powers upon Turkey. Every one must admit such a circle was logically vicious ; but that phrase would not denote the moral hue of the transaction. The noble Earl the Secretary of State

could only act on the instructions of the Cabinet who sent him.

It was not with any view to personal reflection he (Lord Campbell) inquired, could international hypocrisy go further than to employ, as reasons for not upholding Turkey in her object and her argument, the concessions which Turkey was prepared to make in the event of being deserted? Without any further struggle or exertion, on the ground of the Turkish Declaration, which never sanctioned such a course—which, on the contrary, explained its inconveniences—the substantial clauses of the Treaty were abandoned. Maritime and military arsenals might rise again upon the coasts of the Black Sea, the whole fleet of Russia reappear upon its waters.

In the next meeting there occurred the only semblance of debate which happened in the Conference. The Turkish Plenipotentiary desired to extend the power of calling foreign fleets into the Bosphorus, so that they might come from the Black Sea, or from beyond it. To explain the view of Turkey on that point would require a longer detail than he wished to go into at present. He alluded to it only that the noble Earl the Secretary of State might not lose whatever praise he was entitled to. With proper firmness he resisted a dangerous proposition.

In the fourth meeting the new clauses were adopted. In the fifth, which was most critical, the French Ambassador arrived, and found that everything had been settled in his absence. He simply concurred in the irrevocable, while he disapproved it. It was true that from the moment Turkey acquiesced, he thought it right to acquiesce. But Turkey only gave her acquiescence on the ground of being alone: had the French Ambassador been there, her isolation might have been averted.

The last Protocol he need not dwell upon at all, as it was merely ceremonial. It might excite the blushes of

the noble Earl the Secretary of State to hear again the various acknowledgments his courtesy elicited. The tone of general congratulation which ran through the proceedings would seem nearly to imply that the object of a European Conference was, with the greatest possible despatch, to sacrifice the interest of Europe.

The Protocols suggested most forcibly these questions:— Why was Turkey unsupported in her answer to the Russian statement and her vindication of the Treaty? why was her forced submission cited as if it had been genuine and voluntary? why was the whole bent of the Conference a systematic register of the foregone conclusion which was previously disclaimed? Above all, why was the decision come to before the Duc de Broglie had arrived? There was no ground for hurry, and there was a reason for delay. Why was no middle term, if possible, insisted on? The naval power of Russia in the Black Sea might have been limited, although not to the extent to which the Treaty of 1856 reduced it.

Unless he was deceived, Her Majesty's Government would show but little inclination to reply to questions of that nature. They would be rather apt to dwell on the equivalents they had obtained, as an atonement for everything damaging the history of the Conference exhibited. No doubt, by the new arrangements, Turkey had the power of calling friendly fleets into the Dardanelles, should the Treaty seem to be endangered, although war had not been declared. The shortest comment on the value of that privilege resided in a single fact, which must have once been known to their Lordships.

During the disaster of Sinope, which arose from the collision of Turkish and Russian fleets in the Black Sea, the vessels of France and England were in the waters of the Dardanelles. Of what advantage was their presence there? The right to enter the Dardanelles was one thing, the opportunity of reaching the Black Sea was another. The vice of the

equivalent was, that it only began to work where Russia had already fixed her counsels for aggression, whereas the former Treaty stopped them altogether. It might, to some extent, be a security to Constantinople against Russia; but it was no security to Western Europe against a war for its defence.

Again, the country had a right to ask—Could not an advantage so precarious and limited have been obtained before they went to the Crimea, when Silistria was relieved? If it could, men, horses, guns, blood, treasure, reputation, had all been squandered on the cemetery which they founded. Those results would, he thought, be attributed to the Conference by any one who took a fair and steady view of the transaction. A triumph had been gained where none ought to have happened, and the Russian Circular had been crowned with a success which ought to have been wanting to it. The risk of war was greater than it was from co-existing fleets in the Black Sea and the revived ambition of St. Petersburg. A new and grave expenditure was fastened upon Turkey. The Western Powers would be obliged to keep considerable fleets about the Archipelago.

The Supplemental Treaty of April 15th, 1856, by which France, Austria and Great Britain guaranteed the substance of the former one—now that substance was impaired—had received a blow which weakened, perhaps effaced, its validity. And as that Supplemental Treaty was an instrument for solving many difficulties Europe might present, and among the brightest trophies we derived from the Crimea, by that result and by the others the prestige of the country had been lowered.

But a great authority in that House had recently contested the utility of prestige. In a speech which had been widely noticed, the noble and learned lord upon the woolsack had proposed to banish the word from their vocabulary, in order

to put an end to what it represented in their system. The noble and learned lord had even questioned its existence, and challenged all who ventured to believe in it.

Among them, he should view prestige as the unseen and unexerted power which the memory of great actions and the possession of great resources furnished to states, or even individuals. It formed the very essence of a Monarchy when it had ceased to be despotic, and ought not to be lightly questioned by one who guarded the conscience of a Sovereign. It enabled the executive by some hundred thousand constables to keep millions in tranquillity. It gave to the First Napoleon the secret of advancing without an army upon Paris after Elba. Was there not, therefore, an existence, in that subtle atmosphere of immaterial authority, by which force might be subdued and even empires recovered? But if there was, to what State was it more important than to one which could not put a hundred thousand men upon the Continent of Europe, whose fleet was unequal to that of Russia and America united, while she was bound to defend Belgium by engagements, the Netherlands by policy, and the long and vulnerable line of Canada because it was her own?

But when a Government disparaged prestige, in point of fact it most ingeniously avowed a conduct which had lowered it. If the language of the first reply to Prince Gortchakoff had been sustained; if no one had selected Count Bismarck; if a Conference had not been granted to the menaces of Russia, or had it ended in the vindication of the Treaty, would the noble and learned lord have been permitted to go out among the fishmongers and rob them of the last illusion which they cherished as a body? If dinner was not as inconsistent with debate as debate was found to be too frequently with dinner, that shrewd and businesslike assembly might have told him that a Government which happened to give up the Isle of Wight, or any similar possession, could hardly be an unsus-

pected judge of its importance, and that public men were not in a condition to appraise and estimate prestige unless they had succeeded in upholding it.

At the close of the debate

Lord Campbell said, as the information he had moved for had not reached the Foreign Office, he could not urge them to produce it. If he had done nothing more to-night than elicit the remarks which had fallen from the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury), the motion would not be a useless one. The noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville) and the noble Duke the Secretary of State for India (the Duke of Argyll) had taken much pains to defend the policy of going into the Conference, which he (Lord Campbell) had refrained from questioning that evening. But neither of them had attempted to shake the fundamental propositions which he had brought before their Lordships—namely, that in the Conference a specific duty fell upon Great Britain, and that if the Protocols were accurate that duty had been wholly unfulfilled.

March 18th, 1875.

TURKEY AND EASTERN EUROPEAN POWERS.

QUESTION.—OBSERVATIONS.

MY LORDS,—I am glad to find that in putting the question of which I have given notice, I do not stand between the House and any further business, although I shall depart but little from the reserve which I have hitherto maintained upon the topic. If I depart from it at all, it is because we are on the verge of an adjournment for Easter, while something might be done during that period beyond the power of revoking. The two inquiries I have to make, like those which came from me before, and like that which came from my noble friend the former President of the Board of Trade, imply no censure on the Government, and involve it in no difficulty. They are, whether the correspondence of Austria, the German Empire and Russia with the Porte, which has appeared, I believe, in many journals, and certainly in the *Observer* of March 7th, is authentic in its substance ; and, if so, whether the Ottoman despatch has yet received an answer ? Material and relevant as these questions evidently are, at the same time the Government are not positively bound to give them a reply. They are at liberty to state that the three Powers did not transmit to them the Identic Note which has led to so much movement in the capitals of Europe, and therefore that they cannot speak upon the point of authenticity. They are at liberty to state that they are also uninformed whether or not the Ottoman despatch has met with a rejoinder. It certainly was not the business of the Government to answer

a paper so thoroughly in accordance with British views and objects that they might rather have inspired it. But if the Government adopt this language, the world at large must draw, I think, two inferences. They must infer that the three Powers have united as to Eastern policy without admitting to their confidence the other signatories of 1856 ; that they have put an arbitrary, one cannot term it a disinterested, interpretation on the Treaty, without any reference to France, to Italy or to Great Britain. They must infer, also, that their answer to the Ottoman despatch, if it exists, was far from a conclusive one, because, had it been conclusive, it would hardly be suppressed. Exaggerated modesty has never been a quality to which the three Powers have aspired, although since 1815 their union has had a moral as well as a political complexion. Let me not be thought, however, should the Ottoman despatch be still unanswered, to reflect a moment on their silence. An identic answer, to be concerted in three capitals, might well require a longer period than that which has elapsed ; and their silence, if it still remains, is the best and most hopeful incident of the transaction. It is the single point on which one might be willing to extol them.

I should now sit down were I not anxious to put an end to an impression that the few steps which I have taken on the subject have been conceived in a mode or spirit hostile to the Foreign Office. The impression is not likely to exist in this House, or beyond rather distant quarters, in which it is supposed that all Governments are harassed, more or less, by all interrogations.

My Lords, according to the view which I have formed on this occurrence, the Government, by no fault of their own, almost unaided, almost single-handed, are engaged in a struggle with the very elements which taxed the lofty mind of Mr. Canning from 1822 to 1827, and at a rather later period exercised the courage and acumen for which Lord

Palmerston was so well known amongst us. In that struggle it seems to me they cannot do without the distinct and concentrated sympathy of Parliament and of the country. Questions of this kind, although they may not be sufficient—and they are not—have at least a tendency to draw that sympathy towards them.

I am so convinced, by many previous circumstances, that the noble Earl the Secretary of State has fundamentally the same ideas and objects as myself on Eastern policy, that I would give any proof of friendly disposition to the Foreign Office, except that of pointing to a specific course by which the difficulty they acknowledge would be remedied. To point to a specific course I know would be beyond the scope of any one, unless he were surrounded by every diplomatist who can contribute to unravel, and acquainted with every despatch which throws a light upon the subject. But although I would not presume to indicate a course to be pursued, it is a different thing to touch a moment on a course which ought to be avoided, while at the same time there may be some temptation to fall into it.

My Lords, I venture to engage the Government to avoid what I regret to term the bad example of 1870, of which the details and the stages are well known to them. I venture to engage them, should some new blow impend upon the Treaty of 1856, not to smooth the way for it, not to throw a veil of decency around it, not to extricate from difficulty those who have prepared it, not to be the instruments and seconders of a triumph they may be unable to avert, not to protest first in order to be accessories later.

The suggestion which I make is not indeed a brilliant, but entirely a negative one. I ask the Government to keep their dignity unsullied; and, should a European loss be unavoidable, to leave its whole accountability, its whole embarrassment, its whole reproach, to those who have created it.

May 19th, 1875.

GREAT BRITAIN, AUSTRIA AND FRANCE—
TREATIES OF VIENNA (1815) AND PARIS (1856).

ADDRESS FOR COPIES.

MY LORDS,—I have just suggested to my noble friend the noble Earl (Earl Russell), who rarely comes among us, that he should take precedence with his Notice upon Germany and Belgium ; but as he does not wish to do so, although the House may be in some degree impatient to hear what falls from him or the Government upon that question, they will not, I trust, accord to me a less indulgent ear than otherwise they would do.

My Lords, I readily admit that the Treaties, for copies of which I am about to move, by adequate research might possibly be found without the intervention of your Lordships. They might, perhaps, be scattered in a collection of State Papers, or in a mass of guarantees for which a noble marquess opposite moved some years ago. I shall therefore feel bound to explain in a few words the political idea or aim with which the motion is brought forward.

Should we be compelled soon to act upon the Eastern Question, now revived, in consequence of our engagements or our objects, Austria would appear to be the sole ally we are enabled to invoke with any prospect of advantage. France would no longer be depended on as formerly. Her wounds are too fresh, her powers too exhausted,—as some think, even her resentments too absorbing. Neither the German Empire nor the Italian Kingdom is bound by any treaty to come

forward. Spain has never been accustomed yet to mingle in the controversies which relate to the subversion or defence of Ottoman authority, and few would judge her now at liberty to do so.

Austria, on the other hand, is bound—and this in a few minutes will be clearer—by a regular and formal guarantee to act with us upon the subject. She has a population of 35,000,000, and an army in proportion to it. The wars of 1859 and 1866 have been disastrous to her. But how many disastrous wars has Austria formerly survived? To what power may you apply with so much fidelity the well-known expression—

"Adversis rerum immersabilis undis"?

Since 1866 she has also been in a great degree reorganised, by that distinguished man (Count Beust), to whom it has fallen as a lot to perform the greatest things under the greatest disadvantages.

My Lords, if that view is just, the step which Austria is alleged to be on the verge of taking, as regards Servia and Roumania, is deeply interesting to this country, because it would involve a final bar to all co-operation for the maintenance of Turkey. It would range Austria too completely with the adversaries of that power to leave an aptitude for union with its friends.

The step to which I have referred tends, briefly, to detach the Danubian Principalities from the Empire they belong to. This is not the moment to go into the train of reasoning by which that proposition is established. It is certain to present itself at once to every mind conversant with the subject. How could Austria be invited to repair an infraction in the general arrangements of 1856, when the infraction sprang directly from the measures she had taken? How could she escape the new, although illicit, ties she would have recently

contracted? With what dignity could Great Britain invite her to maintain a cause she had so openly determined to abandon? A barrier between Great Britain and Austria on the Eastern Question would spring up, would be matured, would be reciprocally felt, and neither Power could surmount it. It is therefore worth while to exhaust every method of, as it were, reclaiming Austria, before the deviation is a final one, which any day it may become.

Although the facts are not of the same magnitude, the situation is analogous to that we occupied before Nice and Savoy were annexed, before Denmark was invaded, before the Russian armies crossed the Pruth, before the war between France and Germany was unavoidable. Something is likely to take place upon the Continental world involving future difficulties, which ought to be, if possible, averted. The course which I suggest is to bring certain documents conspicuously forward; and I proceed to say a word as to their nature, and to the effect which they are likely to produce, if now demanded by your Lordships.

The most important and the most applicable by far is the Treaty of April 15th, 1856, in which France, Austria and Great Britain engaged themselves collectively and separately to defend the Treaty of March 30th, 1856, embodying the general arrangements made after the Crimean War, from every infraction. Let the House remark the phrase. It is not only an engagement to come forward and defend the Porte against armed force, but to maintain the previous Treaty against every infraction.

According to the language of the noble Earl the Secretary of State, as I have understood it, according to the language of the Ottoman despatch, which has not been replied to, Austria may be described as meditating an infraction on the system formed by the Allies who went to the Crimea. But when the Guarantee of April 15th, 1856, appears, it is seen that

Austria is bound to resist such an infraction and make war upon its authors. An empire which respects itself would scarcely wish to be in a position so ambiguous, and might be led to pause before decidedly approaching it.

As regards the Treaty of January 3rd, 1815, between France, Austria and Great Britain, I refer to it for the obvious purpose of establishing that, after a struggle of nearly twenty years, Austria had the same mind, the same policy, the same determination as that which guided her in 1856; that she was equally resolved to join the Western Powers in order to maintain the European balance and the general tranquillity.

The Treaty of January 3rd, 1815, bears a similar relation to the general arrangements of Vienna as the Treaty of April 15th, 1856, bears to the system founded by the Congress of Paris at that period. Both are outworks and defences of something which immediately preceded them; of something larger than themselves. But the Treaty of January 3rd, 1815, may be regarded as the emanation of Prince Metternich, whose very signature concludes it. It is the best reply to those who, in order to disparage the validity of what was done in 1856, might treat it as a modern, momentary, fanciful departure from the established line the House of Hapsburg have pursued. No sooner is the Treaty of January 3rd, 1815, recalled to notice at Vienna, than it is seen that the Guarantee of 1856 is but a second application of the principle Prince Metternich had traced, and which in days of renovated force, authority and splendour, the Austrian Empire had adopted as his design. Another word is not required on that part of the subject.

My Lords, as to the effect on Austria these Treaties may be expected to produce, should the Motion be adopted, I have incidentally alluded to it. They must render clear to many, what no doubt the Foreign Office have already explained to some, that an erroneous course is on the verge of being

pursued, and one of which the full results have not been adequately realised. The fact is less astonishing, and less a topic of reproach, when we reflect upon the void of Austrian counsels which the absence of Count Beust was likely to occasion.

As things stand, it should not be forgotten that, in all Governments, opinion is in some degree divided. It would be strange, perhaps, if history was entirely revealed, to see how many critical conclusions have been narrowly arrived at. But we remark the process even in Committees. It betrays itself in every set of men by whom any kind of business, political or military or financial, is transacted. It is therefore worth while, even at a late moment, to add a weight to that scale at the preponderance of which you are legitimately aiming.

The chance of acting with effect, on such a view, is greater in the Austrian Empire than elsewhere, because within it avowed duality exists; because the conflict of ideas, of interests, of races is perpetual; because the relation of old and new authority is not entirely adjusted; because there are springs of influence whose force can hardly be appreciated, until it suddenly appears; because there is a Press in many tongues to bear on the Executive. A system composed of seventeen Diets, of a dozen nationalities, of two Assemblies at Vienna, of two at Pesth, together with a Federal authority beyond them, may not be free from disadvantages, but it is calculated to secure a certain independence of opinion, a certain latitude of judgment, on any question which arises. At least you may assume that a considerable number of influential persons, from statesman-like opinion, are opposed to that line of thinly veiled aggression on the Porte which the Identic Note of October last unfortunately indicates.

The publication of these despatches by the House supplies

them with an arm, which cannot be effectually encountered. It must materially aid the Foreign Office in any effort they are making. The Foreign Office can only appeal to men in power. The despatches strengthen those who are combined to watch, and even those, perhaps, who are entitled to control them. At the same time, I indulge in no excessive confidence, in no unbalanced hope as to the result to be arrived at. The negotiation with the Danubian Principalities may possibly occur. In that event the House would have done something to impede or to retard continued movement on a path unhappily adopted. In that event the House would also have done something, when future controversies happen, to divest this country of all responsibility for the loss of an ally and for the presence of a European complication.

At the close of the debate,—

Lord Campbell said that the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had not even attempted any answer to the train of reasoning by which the Motion was supported. If, however, he thought that the production of the Treaties would do more harm than good, and would not be so much an aid as an encumbrance, he was of course entitled to resist it, although no argument was offered in that sense. He (Lord Campbell) would not divide the House when he knew that they were anxious to go on to the next Notice, nor was he able to contend with the majority of the Government. But he should decline to withdraw the Motion, and leave to the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the responsibility of its being negatived.

July 26th, 1875.

IDENTIC NOTE TO THE OTTOMAN PORTE, ETC.

RESOLUTION.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising to call the attention of the House to the Identic Note of Austria, the German Empire and Russia to the Ottoman Porte of October 20th, 1874; to the reply of the Ottoman Porte of October 23rd, 1874; and to the Correspondence recently presented on the subject; and to move to resolve—

“That this House concurs with Her Majesty’s Government as to the illegality of the demand addressed to the Ottoman Porte by the three Powers, Austria, the German Empire and Russia, in their Identic Note of October 20th, 1874;”

And—

“That this House regrets that no effectual measures seem to have been taken to prevent or to retard the definitive conclusion of a Treaty between Austro-Hungary and the Danubian Principalities,”

said: My Lords,—Just before Easter the noble Earl the Secretary of State told the House that the Papers, which form in some degree the subject of my Notice, would in a few weeks be on the table. Last Monday, for the first time, they were in the hands of members. The conception of the noble Earl as to the period involved in a few weeks seems to be drawn from an age in which longevity went further than it does

even at present. No doubt, when men lived a hundred and fifty years, a few weeks was a correct description of the interval between Easter and the Dog Days, as at that time there may have appeared to be only a few hours in a fortnight, or a few minutes in a day. What renders the delay a little more remarkable is, that the last despatch is dated January 20th, so that on the face of it there is not any reason why the whole book, which is less than thirty pages, should not have appeared in February or March.

However, I do not wish to criticise the noble Earl upon the point, but merely to excuse myself for being forced to address the House at what I know appears an inconvenient moment. It is no great fault—perhaps it is a kind of merit—in a Secretary of State, who seems born for higher things, to fall into the habits and traditions of the office he presides over. And these are well known to be, either to avert debates, or, if they must occur, to bring them on when men have to perform the thankless operation of beating iron cold, or by the lateness of the Session bring the ashes of their mind in contact with the rising flood of Parliamentary indifference.

My Lords, whatever may be thought on other questions, the House, I am convinced, will favour my decision of adding Resolutions to the Notice. A noble duke upon the other side, who has long engaged the deference of all who belong in any way to Scotland (the Duke of Buccleuch), has quite recently laid down that if you want debate you must have Resolutions. It would also have been arrogant on my part to expect any of your lordships to listen to an exposition of the Papers which could not lead to a result. Beyond that, it seems to me that when any one has taken up a subject of this character the House has a right to ask that he should point out some mode by which their judgment may be felt, by which their power may be usefully exerted with regard to it, although he does so at considerable risk, and although the

House has a complete discretion of adopting his proposal or rejecting it.

The practical effect at which these Resolutions aim may be uncovered in a moment. It is to localise and to restrict an infraction of the Treaties of 1856, acquired by the blood and consecrated by the honour of Great Britain—an infraction which the noble Earl the Secretary of State condemns, but which, as regards the conduct of one Power at least, he has not succeeded in averting.

My Lords, I need not dwell at all upon the former Resolution, since it is one of approbation and concurrence as regards the Government. It seems to be a just and proper tribute to their resistance of the Identic Note which the three Powers addressed to the Ottoman Porte on October 20th. As to the nature of that demand, Her Majesty's Government offered, as you may see in all of their despatches, an unqualified opinion. They deserve the greater credit because none of the other Western Powers were so placed as to hold decided or effective language on that subject. It is true, indeed, that Austria, as the Papers show, evidently doubted the legality, but was not on that account less forward in her action.

With regard to the second Resolution, it is one of admonition, not of censure—to the effect that, unless there is something unexplained, something in the background, the Government ought to have done more to prevent or to retard the definitive conclusion of a Commercial Treaty between Austria and Roumania, when they viewed it as regrettable.

I readily admit my obligation to support this resolution. Indeed, the point is so important that here I should desire to bring a short and easy train of reasoning under the judgment of the House, which may perhaps be calculated to force the gravity of the transaction home to minds which have not previously considered it. The principle of the three Powers, whose union has been so often serious to Europe, from the

anarchy of Poland, at the end of the last century, down to the extinction of Cracow in 1847, is that the vassal principalities of Turkey shall negotiate commercial treaties, independently of the Empire in which they are incorporated. A congeries of minute arguments has been heaped up to show that trade requires the arrangement.

But the noble Earl the Secretary of State has justly pointed out that the question is not commercial, but political. It is not a question of what tends to importation, as if revenue were the single object of societies, but of what the Law of Nations interdicts and sanctions. Now, the Law of Nations indicates distinctly that the power to negotiate commercial treaties is the power to negotiate without restriction upon everything.

In the early spring, and again within the last few days, I felt bound to look through all the chapters upon treaties in Vattel. He is still the recognised authority of Europe, and I first learnt to refer to him from Lord Palmerston himself. Nowhere does he sanction the distinction which the three Powers have affected to establish. Nowhere does he view commercial treaties as legitimate unless they are the exercise of a general negotiating faculty. Wheaton, whose treatise is received on the other side of the Atlantic, has a passage which ought not to be passed over, because it solves the question by deduction. It is—and I could give the page to noble lords—to the effect that the validity of treaties ceases when either of the contracting parties forfeits independence. What follows? That their validity will not begin until dependence has been abrogated.

We learn, therefore, from Vattel, that to negotiate commercial treaties is to negotiate all treaties, and from Wheaton that the vassal principalities must throw off their dependence before any contract can bind or regulate their conduct. Every one is thus led to see—without too much mental effort—that

the arrangements proposed by the three Powers would be a large and decided movement in the path of separation.

But although untenable in principle, they might still be no more than the assertion of an heretical and unproductive theory, if the communities in question were not imbued with any separative tendency. Here facts come in to enlighten us. We know—and the noble Earl the Secretary of State himself has reprimanded—the aspirations of the Roumanian Government for a nationality they would be incapable of holding against the Powers on their frontier. We know the restless movements of the Servian Principality from the time when in 1863, the withdrawal of the Turkish garrison was urged upon our Government. The scheme of the three Powers is not, then, a barren declaration, but a living torch, addressed to an inflammable material, which rushes forward to accept it.

The next link is one the House can easily appreciate. When the Danubian Principalities are severed from the Empire which controls them, commercial treaties would be themselves a constant pretext for occupation by the neighbouring authorities. They have merely to allege that a stipulation has been violated, and send an army to the Danube to promote the execution of it.

But all those who call to mind the campaign of Catherine II. against Turkey, or the campaigns of 1828-9, or that of 1853, will be agreed that the Danubian Principalities are the route to Constantinople, in a strategic sense, as distinctly as Herat is thought by eminent authorities to be the gate of India. No sooner, therefore, are they occupied than the Guarantee of April 15th, 1856, which engages you by arms to support Ottoman integrity, begins to force itself upon you. And here, let me remark, that the moment would not be similar to that of 1854, when my noble friend the noble Earl on the cross-benches (Earl Grey) came down to this House, and gave all the arguments against going to war, explaining, as he

did, that no engagement bound the country ; that it was free to linger in repose ; that policy alone sufficed to govern its decision.

In spite of my noble friend the war occurred. It culminated in the Guarantee I have alluded to. The question would not now be one of prudence, but of faith. Great Britain would be compelled to take up arms or sacrifice her honour. And while this great debate was agitating Parliament, millions of British capital, the fortunes of many men who have promoted the development of Ottoman resources, would be in utter insecurity. The whole chain is now before the House.

Under these circumstances, it was evidently a British object, if you could, to divert Austria from an application of the principle the three Powers have laid down, and which is fraught with danger to this country. So long as Austria refrained, the principle of which the Ottoman authorities had exposed the character might never have been executed, and even speedily renounced.

Here, then, we are bound to ask, my Lords, has the Secretary of State done what could be done for so legitimate a purpose ? has he pointed out to Austria the many grounds on which the final step might be retarded ? has he shown that at the best it was a question between commercial and political advantages, of which the latter far outweighed the former ? above all, has he given prominence to the very Guarantee I have alluded to, of April 15th, 1856, which binds Austria with Great Britain and with France in the defence of Ottoman integrity ? The position in which Austria stood as defined by that compact was remarkable, and gave the noble Earl a *locus standi* for remonstrance—although friendly—which could not possibly escape him. Austria had the strongest interest in avoiding whatever tended to endanger the stability she might be called upon to defend. She had, besides, the strongest obligation to avoid it.

When a Power undertakes by force of arms to guard a system from infraction, no one would deny that she is equitably bound to abstain from measures which positively are, or demonstrably tend to be, one. If any one was under an engagement to protect an edifice from fire, you would not say he was at liberty to act, from time to time, as an incendiary within it.

A mass of arguments beyond my power to convey, beyond the patience of the House to listen to, might be constructed by despatch-writers so competent as the noble Earl and his supporters, to arrest for a long time the course which Austria was meditating, and which has now become a grave event, although it is not yet appreciated properly. Have those arguments been used although they are not given in the Papers? Neither before nor since the Identic Note is any trace of them exhibited. If modesty has led the noble Earl to keep them back, when this appears I shall be ready to acquit him.

There is one circumstance, however, which ought to be alluded to in passing—although I shall not dwell upon it. On May 19th I moved for the production of the Treaty which binds Austria so remarkably, and fixes her position on the Eastern question, because I knew from the best authorities that its production at that moment was the only chance of acting, in our sense, on the still hesitating, still undetermined attitude of statesmen at Vienna. Without any argument at all, the noble Earl repelled the Motion, in a way by which his own responsibility was seriously heightened. In short, he took a course which nothing could defend, except the opposite result to that which has arisen. Had the negotiations of Austria and Roumania blown over—and there was considerable hope of it—the noble Earl might have come down to this House and said : “ Your proposition was superfluous. We have gained our point without you. It was not essential to produce the

Treaties you required. We have saved the country eighteen pence or half a crown, which their production would have cost it, thus showing how adroitly we can blend finance and foreign policy together." And it is, my Lords, a great flight of statesmanship to do so. But the result has shown—what I was thoroughly convinced of—that the proposal was not superfluous, but opportune and indispensable. Up to the end of time the noble Earl can never possibly establish that, had he acted differently, had he acted as usage would suggest, and something more obligatory called for, the negotiation then suspended would have come to the maturity which he, as well as I, was anxious to avert.

The only inference I draw from this regrettable proceeding is that, if the noble Earl repelled one method as improper and unnecessary, he was bound to resort to some other he preferred, or to succeed by abstinence from any. When it turns out that, according to his own papers, which for six months have been undergoing revision, to which he might give any form he chose, he has done literally nothing, when that inaction has been accompanied by failure, no Opposition, however enervated and divided, no Member of an Opposition, however favourable to the Government, could pass his conduct without question.

The second Resolution, therefore, was inevitable ; but it leaves it open to the noble Earl to say that judicious measures were adopted at Vienna, although without success, and that he does not think it prudent to convey them to the Legislature. So far, I well know that your Lordships go along with me. But it is not enough to prove the justice of the resolutions, unless one can establish their utility. The House may fairly say that they are not bound to move out of their way to uphold the Secretary of State when he has taken a sound line, and to admonish him when he has been feeble or inadequate, unless a good effect upon the

continent of Europe can be traced to their proceeding. I approach that consideration, and all the more because it may be rapidly disposed of.

Let the House only glance at the exact stage of the transaction. The three Powers laid down a new principle. The Ottoman authorities immediately exposed its inconveniences. The British Government upheld the Ottoman authorities. No kind of refutation was elicited. The whole thing remained suspended, and might have disappeared. One Power alone, after a labyrinth of difficulties, resolved to execute the project of which the standard was unrolled.

My Lords, it is a perfect fallacy—although some who think with me were first inclined to adopt it—to assume that nothing now remains to be contended for, and that the Austrian step disposes of the subject. The extent of the blow to Ottoman integrity, the extent of the disparagement which falls upon the system of 1856, will be proportioned to the mass of states who follow that example, who so act as to encourage and confirm the separatist forces of the vassal principalities. If no one joins, the evil will be localised. If many join, the crisis we are anxious to avert will be precipitated.

Neither Russia nor the German Empire, although they shared in the Identic Note, have, since the Ottoman reply, done anything whatever. But even in Italy and France—although there is not time to prove it—a struggle appears to go on between commercial and political ideas, of which the termination is uncertain.

The opinion of this House—which, as I have often seen, has a prestige abroad even superior to that which it enjoys within the limits of the kingdom—would be the very barrier to check and guard the oscillating Powers. And the opinion of the House would be sufficiently conveyed in both the Resolutions. Both imply that the position of the Identic Note

is not to be sustained ; both imply that the Austrian measure ought not to be generalised, while both are qualified to isolate it. My Lords, if any one maintains that the undetermined Powers cannot be held back—that they are too intent on the supposed material advantages of these direct engagements with the vassal principalities—there is one part of the subject he has not yet attended to.

My Lords, the three Powers themselves, when they resolved on the Identic Note, can hardly have observed the lever they were going to furnish to the general disturbers of political society. Indeed, the more we mingle in affairs, the more we see that critical decisions are often come to in a hurry. No sooner is it laid down that dependencies may enter into treaties which involve a general negotiating faculty, and lead on by easy passages to the right of making peace and war, than every state which is not perfectly compact and homogeneous becomes threatened. If those who rule at Constantinople are forced to tremble for Moldavia, Wallachia and Servia, France may be disquieted for Algeria and Corsica, the Italian kingdom for Sardinia and Sicily, Great Britain for various possessions among the quarters of the globe. On the Austrian Empire the principle is calculated to rebound with a disintegrating force which clearly has not been anticipated. For the House will bear in mind that you cannot possibly maintain a special right upon this subject in the vassal principalities of Turkey. The despatches of the noble Earl completely overthrow that proposition. The principle is not a local, but a general one. To describe it briefly, it amounts to a new and ingenious road across the lines of public law to the dismemberment of empires. It is just, therefore, that a House like yours—which, although night by night we see it plunged into the business of a vestry or a school board, will not forget its mission as a guardian of sound principles and elevated interests—should do something

to restrain the Powers which only verge upon, which only contemplate an error, unworthy of themselves, injurious to us, and tending to the loss of national cohesion in large and complex states, whatever age, whatever clime they may belong to.

My Lords, one among many views which leads me to think the evil may be localised, is that the Cabinet of Germany have not the slightest motive to extend it ; that, as these despatches show, they were drawn into the Identic Note reluctantly and doubtfully ; that many European Governments look up to them for counsel at this moment ; that they are themselves directed by a mind to which ideas more just or more complete than those which guided it at first, have often been admitted. But every one may form his own opinion on this subject, which I scarcely touch upon in passing.

My Lords, it is not unusual to anticipate objections on a motion of this sort, and to reply to them. The practice seems to me a dangerous one, as it is likely to fatigue the House, and indeed I know but one mode of thought with which the Resolutions are in conflict. It is that mode of thought—and many hold it conscientiously—which looks to a regular alliance between Russia and Great Britain as a specific for the maladies to which Europe is exposed.

It cannot be denied that any course which discourages or limits the execution of the Identic Note is unfavourable to the objects Russia has been long accustomed to pursue in the Danubian Principalities. The eloquent historian Lamartine pointed out that the sword of Russia had composed the Treaty of Kainardji, by which Turkey was so much humiliated in 1774. Since then her policy in the Danubian Principalities has never been reversed, although late events may sometimes have interrupted it. To adopt a motion to disturb it or to check it is not the part of men who wish to substitute an intimate relation with that country for those

paths which Mr. Canning and Lord Palmerston bequeathed to us.

But the House might be justified in asking how far that alliance can be compassed, except by sacrificing all the objects for which our foreign policy continues. At present it is usual to remark that the European balance has been wholly superseded. It may be so. But it is only superseded and eclipsed because Russia draws into her system important Powers which used to counteract her. Should Great Britain fling herself as an additional and subordinate ingredient into that sinister, dark and overgrown preponderance, the dismay of those states which prize their independence without large armies to uphold it will be as boundless as it must be certainly well-founded.

Even, therefore, should it be proved to-night that Resolutions such as these are little favourable to united action with St. Petersburg, they ought not on that account to be rejected by your Lordships. Nations which aspire to exist can hardly be unfaithful to the purpose which renders their existence sacred to the world.

The noble Lord concluded by moving the Resolutions.

At the close of the debate :—

If no other noble lord is going to address the House, I shall feel bound to make some comments on what has passed, and to announce the course I propose about the Resolutions. As regards my noble friend upon the right (the Earl of Rosebery), he has shown an aptitude in foreign, not unequal to that which he was well known before to have upon domestic topics, and has taken the first step in what I trust may be a long-continued effort to uphold the validity of treaties and the honour of his country.

The noble Lord who may be justly regarded as the Nestor of the Foreign Office (Lord Hammond), and the noble Earl on the front bench (the Earl of Kimberley), who has gone with him, have adopted the position of the Identic Note; they have supported the legality of the demand which it embodied; they are at utter variance with the Secretary of State, they are exposed to the reply which his despatches have brought forward, and I am not compelled in any way to answer them.

But when I come to the noble Earl (the Earl of Derby) the Secretary of State himself, the importance of his office renders it incumbent on me to encounter some of the remarks of which I was the object. The noble Earl ascribed to me the view that a Parliamentary discussion some time back would have been the proper method for giving a more favourable turn to the transaction now before us. Undoubtedly I do maintain that, if a Parliamentary discussion were to happen, its chance of retarding the Austrian negotiation would have been greater before than after the negotiation was concluded. But Parliamentary discussion was not, as it occurred to me, the most important weapon to rely on in the business.

The noble Earl has said much to extenuate the gravity of what he was not able to avert, and denied that in Moldavia and Wallachia there is the separatist tendency which I imputed to them, and which forms an important link in the case I urged upon your Lordships. How comes it, therefore, that the noble Earl, in language I will read, officially rebuked the aspirations of Prince Charles and of his counsellors for an independence they would not be able to perpetuate? [Lord Campbell here read the passage.] The noble Earl has charged me with general exaggeration in the importance I attached to the formation of these Treaties. What have I done except adopt the language of the Ottoman authorities, "that they are the earliest

stage in the road of demands still more important, still more inadmissible?"

The variance is between the noble Earl and men whom patriotism, interest, experience enlighten, who have a local knowledge of the countries in dispute, whose minds are constantly employed upon the subject. I venture to prefer the judgment which they form at Constantinople to that which he may form at Downing Street—were he without a bias—upon some parts of the question. Is there no such thing as ability, sagacity or insight on the Bosphorus? Is statesmanship unknown or is diplomacy uncultivated on those waters?

The noble Earl has asked me, in a manner the most pointed, "What ought we to have done?" My Lords, there never was a question easier to satisfy. If either before the Identic Note of October 20th, or during the long interval which followed, one despatch had been submitted to the Austrian Government pointing out—however guardedly and cautiously—that the course they meditated would not harmonise with the engagements which bound them to Great Britain and to France upon the Eastern Question,—that the advantages they sought might be more legitimately compassed,—it would have seemed to me the conduct of the Government ought not to be impugned. Will it be said that such a task was beyond the faculties of the noble Earl and those who sit around him here, or those who aid him at the Foreign Office?

My Lords, the noble Earl regards the second Resolution as a censure. In that event, however just its terms, I shall withdraw it. Dissatisfied with the proceedings of the noble Earl in this affair, I do not fail to recognise his international utility in the function of maintaining peace between two contending Powers, or Powers not unlikely to contend. It would not, therefore, be consistent with my views as to the

interest of Europe by any vote to weaken his authority at present. As to the former Resolution, nothing will induce me to withdraw it, and nothing will, I hope, prevent the noble Earl from acquiescing in it. It is a tribute to the Government as against the Identic Note, and it must tend to counterbalance the effect of the Austrian example on those states which at this very moment are doubting whether to be swayed by it.

August 13th, 1875.

RAILWAY BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF.

QUESTION.—OBSERVATIONS.

LORD CAMPBELL asked whether Her Majesty's Government would object during the autumn to consider some proper mode of giving their support to the construction of a railway between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, in accordance with the views of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1872? The noble Lord said he should not dwell on the advantages of the project to British interests, as they had been frequently explained and were well known to the Government, whose Chancellor of the Exchequer had presided over the Committee of 1872. The object of the question was to neutralise or modify, by what the Government might say in the House of Lords, the unintentional effect of what the Prime Minister had lately said in the House of Commons on the subject. The effect, which he considered unintentional, was to prevent capital from being attracted to the project. In point of fact, however, the scheme which the Prime Minister apparently disparaged was not the scheme which the Ottoman Government were now inclined to favour.

He (Lord Campbell) would only add that a rare union of favourable circumstances encouraged the attempt now to act on the Report of the Select Committee of 1872. The Government had a majority in both Houses. Opposition was more a name than a reality. The Chancellor of the

Exchequer, in matters of this kind so often the Cerberus at the gate—unless his mind had wholly changed—would, on the contrary, become the pioneer and leader of the enterprise. The public mind was now awakened upon Eastern topics. Last of all, they had a First Lord of the Treasury who, in memorable language, had declared that Great Britain ought to be considered an Asiatic even more distinctly than a European Power. Was such a moment likely to recur, and ought it to be sacrificed?

June 26th, 1876.

TURKEY.—THE BERLIN MEMORANDUM.

OBSERVATIONS.

MY LORDS,—I came into the House, like every one else, unprepared for the question which a noble Duke upon the front bench beneath has brought on as to Bulgaria. But having received to-day some information through a British correspondent at Rustchuk, as the subject is entirely connected with my Notice, it may be well, perhaps, to mention at the outset that it does not at all confirm, to their full extent, the statements of which the noble Duke desires to test the authenticity. The fact is, that the Sublime Porte, assailed by insurrections from without, at very different points in an extended territory, is reduced to the employment of those auxiliary forces in which discipline can hardly be maintained.

My Lords, as the Notice is in some degree to call attention to a volume of despatches, I wish to say a few words on its contents. The most interesting documents which meet us are the letters of Consul Holmes, whose post at Bosna Serai brought him into contact with the insurrection at its origin. Nothing can be more clear or valuable than the light he throws upon it. From him we learn that the undue liberality of the Porte was the immediate cause of the explosion. Some inhabitants of Herzegovina had of their own accord transferred themselves to Montenegro. They unhappily obtained permission to return, which the Governor-General of the vilayet counselled the refusal of. They very soon diffused

the incendiary lessons they had lately been acquiring. In none of his expressions does Consul Holmes admit the insurrection to be genuine. His language naturally merits a great deal more attention than I can now devote to it.

The next interesting document is a long pamphlet, which professes to give the view of the insurgents as to maladministration and abuses. It certainly is able, vivid and minute ; it might make an impression on any one who read it. But it is traced to no authority whatever. Consul Holmes himself transmitted it to the noble Earl the Secretary of State, without any clue to the workshop it proceeds from.

Soon afterwards we travel on to the well-known Circular of Count Andrassy. The House may judge its scope by one recommendation : it is that all the revenue derivable from general taxation in a province should be spent exclusively upon it, and never find its way into the exchequer of the Porte : as if it were suggested that the produce of the income tax in Yorkshire or any other county were by an Act of Parliament devoted to its prisons and its roads. No wonder that grave men like the Duc Decazes and the noble Earl the Secretary of State accepted with some reserve a proposition so astounding ! They might, indeed, have asked themselves what strange interpretation of the 9th Article in the Treaty of March 30th, 1856, had possibly suggested it—that Article which stipulates against all interference on the part of foreign Powers between the Sultan and his people.

Soon after we arrive at an elaborate despatch from the noble Earl the Secretary of State, in which, with manifest reluctance, he conforms as far as he is able to the line of Count Andrassy. But, as it has long ago been stated that his concurrence was only granted at the suggestion of the Porte, who viewed the Austrian Note with horror, but thought that such participation would make it less oppressive, I need not dwell on that stage of the transaction.

Here the Blue-book ends. It is only about a hundred pages, but it is not unimportant, as it enables Consul Holmes to give that interpretation of an event which in its consequences agitates the world, for which every capital in Europe ought to be indebted to him.

My Lords, as to the Correspondence which I move for, I am anxious, as far as possible, to spare the Government embarrassment. It is not my aim to draw from them prematurely what has been termed the Berlin Memorandum, or any answer they have made to it: nor is it with a view to those documents that I employ the term of recent Correspondence. I allude to any Correspondence with Berlin which has taken place during the current year; and there is an obvious reason for demanding it at present.

It was generally felt at the beginning of the Session, by those who had the nearest opportunities of watching the position at Constantinople or elsewhere, that the line of safety would be found in bringing the influence of Berlin to bear on those Powers which more or less upheld the insurrection. Having endeavoured to maintain that view at the beginning of the Session, for whole months I never troubled the noble Earl with any proposition or inquiry, but waited to see how far, and if at all with what results, it had been acted on.

At last, during the course of May, the public learnt, with little satisfaction, that the authorities of Berlin had sanctioned a proposal which the noble Earl declined to approve. In order to gain a just impression of how we stand with Germany at present, in order to decide how far the Government have done their utmost to avert a situation much to be regretted, at least some portion of the Correspondence is essential. It is open, no doubt, for the noble Earl to say that none has taken place in the sense I have referred to; but he will hardly make such an admission. In every other case I venture to maintain the motion ought to be acceded to, giving as it does a perfect

latitude as to what shall be produced and as to the moment of producing it.

My Lords, I have now said all that is strictly indispensable as connected with the Notice; and as no man can possibly predict whether the subject will again come before the House before the Session closes, any further observations I may hazard ought to be brief and hurried over.

It is useless to dilate on a series of grandiose and tragical occurrences which the journalists of the day have had so many opportunities of painting. It is useless to point out at length the immense advantage which our policy derives from a revolution which at once propitiates and staggers the insurgents, checks superfluous expenditure, limits arbitrary power, secures to the best minds at Constantinople the ascendancy they wanted. Nor do I think it altogether necessary—a few days ago it seemed to be so—to contend that danger is very far from being exhausted, and that until the Bosnian insurrection closes altogether we cannot see what obligations our country might be called on to fulfil. This disposition to rather premature repose has been in some degree corrected by the attitude of Servia, of which we heard something from the other side to-night. On that point I wish to make an observation to your Lordships.

Not long ago a question was put to the Government as to the Treaty of April 15th, 1856, to which I have more than once directed the attention of the House. The noble Earl the Secretary of State did a considerable service in reaffirming its validity, which the Conference of 1871 had certainly obscured, although it did not actually impair it. The noble Earl went on to add that it was not framed in order to defend the Porte against its vassal principalities. I think with him that such was not the object primarily contemplated by it. But if through the medium of a vassal principality a foreign Power should endanger the integrity of the Porte; if a

vassal principality invades the Porte, with foreign gold to aid and foreign officers to lead it, then I should contend that the Treaty of April 15th entitles you to an influence upon the vassal principality you could not otherwise have aimed at.

But, setting aside completely the Treaty of April 15th, there is a special ground of interference as to Servia, which at a time so critical as this ought not to be forgotten. Certain Governments, not many years ago, induced the Sultan to evacuate the fortress of Belgrade, which he was at liberty to hold by the Conventions which existed. They thus became responsible to him for any future risks the measure might occasion.

In 1863, when the question was much canvassed, Lord Palmerston declined to sanction that evacuation; and I am not sure whether he ever gave a greater proof of his sagacity. It took place, however, a few years after his death, with the concurrence of the Foreign Office. It involved Great Britain in an obligation to counteract as far as possible the evils which are flowing from it. It is not to be supposed that we intended to place a weapon in the hands of Servia to be employed against the Ottoman integrity we are bound by treaty to defend—to be employed, in other words, against our objects and ourselves—without a title to control or remonstrate. It is fortunate we have at Belgrade now, in Mr. White, a Representative whom long experience at Warsaw has familiarised with great events together with their passions and vicissitudes. Supported by the noble Earl, I have no doubt he will not be found unequal to the crisis he is traversing. My Lords, with a view to salutary influence, whether at Belgrade or Bucharest, or in the regions which are more disturbed, or even in Constantinople and St. Petersburg, the measure which I venture to suggest for more consideration is that both Houses of Parliament before the Session finishes should, by a well

considered Resolution, indicate their general adherence to the Treaties of 1856.

The recent language of the Government, perhaps their recent conduct, on their part has proclaimed such fidelity. But so many voices in such various directions, either by violence or ambiguity or discord, have led the European world to doubt whether Parliament is more inclined to guard or to abandon the whole position the Crimean war attained, that reassurance seems to be essential. Had Parliament been less reserved or better understood in 1853, it is very easy to demonstrate now that such a war would not have been imposed upon us.

My Lords, one cannot leave this topic without adverting for a moment to the kind of re-establishment which the public mind has lately undergone upon it. It is now seen more clearly than it was that the interests of Great Britain on the Bosphorus continue, whether the administration of the Porte is good or bad among its subjects. Men observe, at the same time, that the fall of the late Sultan has removed the cause of many evils which were formerly deplored, and paves the way for many changes to which the throne was formerly an obstacle. They know that a force sometimes aggressive, sometimes undermining, always vigilant and subtle, has been near a final triumph on the Bosphorus. They have resolved that, come what may, that triumph shall not be effected. Among the classes of society who influence events, the spirit which existed twenty years ago appears to have revived. Its revival may be deemed among the best securities for peace, because it is among the firmest barriers against attempts by which that peace would be endangered.

July 31st, 1876.

TURKEY.—TREATIES OF 1856.

RESOLUTION.

LORD CAMPBELL rose to move : “ That this House, anxious for the welfare of the various races subject to the Ottoman Empire, and for an improved administration of their government, is ready to support the measures which become necessary for upholding the Treaties of March 30th and April 15th, 1856.”

My Lords, some weeks ago I ventured to maintain that, before Parliament prorogued, Resolutions ought to be adopted on the Eastern Question, on a ground I then alluded to with brevity. Since the further Correspondence was delivered, when nothing of the kind appeared likely to emanate from any other quarter, at the end of last week I put down the Notice which the House observes upon the Paper.

My Lords, looking to the feeling out-of-doors, and to what is going on to-night in the other House of Parliament, this Assembly would be placed so inconveniently, unless a Resolution was before it, that even if I found myself alone I should not be much censured. Without the slightest indiscretion I may mention that what I now propose has the concurrence of the noble Lord who recently supported me, our late Ambassador at St. Petersburg (Lord Napier and Ettrick), and that he would have been here to express himself to-night were he not absent in a remote part of the United Kingdom.

As regards the further Correspondence, I shall not dwell upon it, as so many noble lords are able to discuss it. However rich in the materials of which history is composed,

it does not give birth to many new political conclusions. The most important revelation I have found in it is at page 160, where it appears that the Prince of Montenegro virtually dictated the Memorandum of Berlin. The self-abasement of the magnates who espoused that Memorandum could not go much further than when they raised the Prince of Montenegro to be the arbiter of Europe ; and they ought, perhaps, no longer to suggest the grave invectives which have been occasionally lavished on them.

My Lords, I at once approach the Resolution to be moved. In order to defend it, I shall only ask your Lordships to examine for a moment the circumstances in which we are placed, the results at which we ought to aim, and the degree to which the Resolution, if adopted, would be likely to conduce to them.

The general position is not very different from what it was at the end of June. The effort of the Servian vassal to make war upon his suzerain and annex a portion of his territory seems to have pretty well collapsed. In Bulgaria, to which I may refer again, there is not any dangerous movement. But the former insurrection, openly, instead of secretly, abetted by the Prince of Montenegro, still continues. Among the Russian troops, according to the Continental press, in certain garrisons excitement has been manifested. You still have at Constantinople men in power anxious to correct abuses in the Empire. The hostility of Austria to the Porte in the affair of closing Klek and Suttorina has been more openly exhibited, and that Power is seen, as before, to be directly influenced by Russia. Every now and then some new and fanciful encroachment on the Treaties of 1856 is meditated, whispered or projected. The Foreign Office have been recently approached by that class of politicians who opposed the Crimean War and have not much respect for the engagements it bequeathed to us. These circumstances, although but a scanty fragment

of the moving panorama which surrounds us, suffice to point to the results which ought to be pursued.

My Lords, they would appear to be to fortify the Government against those elements which might divert them from the line of policy and duty they have entered on ; to encourage the reforms in Turkey which such men as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe have long ago traced out, which such men as the Grand Vizier and Midhat Pasha have determined to inaugurate ; and, last of all, to secure the maintenance of peace in Europe where it has not been hitherto disturbed.

That the present Resolution, if adopted, would tend to fortify the Government in the manner I have pointed out, is too obvious to require demonstration : that it would tend to the advantage of the races subject to the Porte is equally distinct upon the face of it : that it would tend to secure the maintenance of peace, so great an object to a country like Great Britain, rich in fame, contented with achievement, engrossed by industry, opposed to acquisition, requires but an easy course of argument to prove it.

What would be most likely to beget hostilities during the autumn ? Some ill-conceived adventure or experiment against the Treaties of 1856 on the part of the Power they restrain, which could not be regarded with indifference by the people of this country ; or some defiance of public law such as occurred in 1870, which would be canvassed and resented in every fraction of society. What is most likely to bring about these sources of collision ? Is it not the hope that they will meet with acquiescence and inertness, which such a Resolution as I move must damp and render difficult to cherish ? How was the war in 1853 created ? My Lords, it was created, as any one may see who looks back to the proceedings of the time, by the silence and ambiguity of Parliament, which led the Russian Czar to misconceive, to misinterpret the intentions of the country. At that time

the ill-judged reserve which decided the Czar to cross the Pruth was more excusable than it would be at present. After a peace of forty years, statesmen had apparently forgotten how war could be averted, how it could be carried on, and how it could be finished with propriety ; so that we had official speeches calculated to produce it, estimates inadequate to feed it, negotiations, when it reached the internecine phase, which only arms could settle.

Again, in 1853 there were not any treaties like the present to uphold ; and it is not so easy for Parliament to indicate a line of action to the Government, as merely to declare or inspire fidelity to the engagements which exist.

My Lords, if the experience of 1853 is not to tell upon us at this moment, all history is a source of folly and deception, and those who have recorded it are among the greatest enemies of wisdom and of statesmanship. Such, however, is not the opinion of mankind at large upon a point which, both in ancient and modern times, has been habitually contemplated.

I will, however, reason only from the knowledge to be acquired in our day upon the Bosphorus. It is easy to remark there that the policy of Russia upon the Eastern Question has its source at Constantinople even more than at St. Petersburg. The former capital is given up to the exertions of diplomacy. In one street you have condensed the thoughts, the passions and the rivalries of Europe. When the British Embassy is prevalent, your relations with the Powers hostile to the Porte are not immediately endangered, because the Embassy presents a formidable barrier. When the British Embassy is feeble in its influence, the Powers hostile to the Porte are constantly encouraged to create the tension which is least to be desired.

When is the British Embassy most capable ?—when it is possible to say that Parliament is undecided and irresolute in its adherence to the Treaties of 1856, or when it is not possible

to say so? My Lords, it would be waste of time to argue such a question. Let those who doubt it proceed and form their own opinions on the spot where only one can be arrived at.

Although no one will contend that such a Resolution can be dangerous, when it is shown to be the best expedient for averting war, some might be led at first to view it as superfluous. But as soon as they reflect on what has taken place within the last twelve months they must, I think, abandon that impression. Within that time there have been many reasons why Parliament should be misunderstood and its adherence to the Treaties should be doubted. We cannot overlook the animosity against the Porte which the position of the bondholders excited. We cannot overlook the language of the individuals or the organs who sustained the outbreak in Herzegovina when it began. We cannot assume that the excited patrons of those whom they consider as oppressed, the unconscious instruments of those who have fomented the disturbances, have not had some effect upon the Continent. No one who has lived anywhere within the great circumference in which the Eastern danger agitates the world, could possibly maintain that the attachment of the British Parliament to the Treaties of 1856 is so well known as to make a declaration in their favour useless or inapposite.

On the other hand, it is inconceivable that, at such a moment, Government should not desire Parliament to strengthen them in their maintenance of treaties. Five Powers have been arrayed against them at Berlin. Except in time of war, the balance of Europe was never so completely overthrown. The scale which nearly kicks the beam is not entitled to repudiate the weight which Parliament can add to it. And if it does, discussion in the Houses is even worse than fruitless. You have the inconvenience and you miss the compensation.

My Lords, of the three grounds on which I recommend the Motion to your Lordships, its tendency to guard the interests

of peace appears to me by far the most important. Other agencies may back up the policy of the Government against the influence which might enfeeble or deprave it; other agencies may cherish and encourage the reforms by which the Sublime Porte would best consult its honour and prosperity; but to calm and to control the spirit of aggressive restlessness, from which calamities may spring, from which in former years they have sprung, it is difficult to point to any element whatever, except the moderating voice of Parliament in favour of the Treaties.

These arguments would probably suffice among those who hold that the Treaties ought to be maintained. But a party has been lately formed—unfortunately it is represented in this House—who, under guise of sympathy with the Bulgarians, openly assert that the Treaties ought to be abandoned; and even hint that Russia—in their eyes—would now be welcome on the Bosphorus.

My Lords, I do not yield to this new party in sympathy with the Bulgarians—with whom, perhaps, I have had more intercourse than they have. The Bulgarians have sent me many pages on their wrongs, that I might make them known to your Lordships, which I would certainly attempt to do unless I were assured from another quarter that their complaints are now being thoroughly investigated, and every effort made to join humanity to firmness in opposing the disturbances of which their country was the theatre.

My Lords, the existence of the new party to which I have referred obliges me to trespass on the House rather longer than I should have done, and to hurry over one or two of the grounds on which it appears to me—in spite of their demand—the Treaties ought to be adhered to.

Of course the general dishonour of abandoning engagements need not be insisted on before an audience in which so great a sensibility exists upon the topic. But we cannot

be unaffected by the circumstance that the country has no redundant store of credit upon foreign policy, from which it can afford to throw away a fraction with impunity. Whether the blame falls justly on Parliament, or on First Ministers, or on Secretaries of State, or on allies, or on adverse turns of fortune not to be surmounted, the result is beyond controversy. Great Britain has suffered deeply in her credit since the period of that war of which Denmark was the victim. On such a point other nations are the only judges, and their voice is universal. What took place in 1870 heightened the impression ; and what took place in 1871 was little likely to reduce it. Many other circumstances, I should not like to specify at present, require a long course of wise and honourable action to efface their recollection. Departure from the Treaties of 1856, so far as they survive, would be the overflowing drop in that cup of national disparagement which does not need to be replenished. We cannot afford to crown a series of reproaches. But the noble Earl the Secretary of State, the Government, and the House itself are quite as much impressed as I am on this topic.

My Lords, there is another ground on which the Treaties ought to be maintained, which does not appeal to sentiment of any kind, although sentiment and policy will not, perhaps, in this House appear entirely unconnected. It is the insuperable difficulty of any new arrangement on the Bosphorus which the Western Powers could accede to. Men who have spent many days and nights upon the Eastern Question will be the first to recognise the difficulty. In exact proportion as they learn something about Servia, the United Principalities and Greece, they are convinced that none of them can become the centre of a new and civilised society, qualified to guard Constantinople for the interest of Europe.

A new possibility is started by some reasoners. They urge that Austria ought to be established at that capital, and seem

to think that there are none but very trifling objections to the consummation they aspire to. In one of his published speeches Prince Bismarck gives a striking illustration of the defect which marks the class of intellects in which this kind of vision has originated. He compares them to persons who have never been in any highland country, and who, when they see a mountain large and naked to the eye, imagine there is nothing easier than by a straight and simple line to march directly to its summit. The crevices, the chasms, the watercourses and the glaciers are utterly beyond their faculties to realise.

In the case of the projectors I allude to, the first bar to their ascending stride, which utterly escapes them, is the Treaty which engages Austria in defence of Ottoman integrity. That, perhaps, might be surmounted. They have then to encounter the dual system recently established by Count Beust, which could scarcely work harmoniously in favour of their enterprise. Beyond that they are doomed to find among the Magyars the greatest fear of being englobed in a Slavonic population. In the next place they meet in eminent Hungarians, such as General Klapka, whose views have lately been pronounced, the strongest possible objection to encroachment on the Porte, to which in former days they felt themselves indebted. Last of all they come into collision with the Greek Patriarch at Constantinople—a force which co-exists with Mussulman, but might not be equally prepared to hail a Roman Catholic ascendancy.

If, indeed, in the inscrutable events the future may reserve, the Austrian Empire was in some degree divided; if germs we see already were to develop into maturity; if Hungary was standing by itself, for anything we know the vassal principalities of Turkey might be led to gravitate towards it. But even if they did the problem would continue. In any case it is unnecessary to dwell upon contingencies beyond our power to secure. We are thus thrown back upon the

Treaties of 1856 the more we labour for alternatives to fill up the void their disappearance would occasion.

My Lords, what course the late Government* will take on this Motion is unknown to me. The course they ought to take is much more easy to determine. The late Government aspire to lead the Party who established the Treaties of 1856. They owe whatever influence they have, in no small degree, to past connection with Lord Palmerston. That which the world regarded as undue subserviency to Russia was among the causes of their downfall. There is now an opportunity before them of usefully disclaiming that propensity. But it is not to be admitted for a moment that the opinion of the late Government, whatever it may be, ought to decide the noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby) and his colleagues on a question of this gravity. When much of Europe is disturbed, and more of it is menaced with disturbance; when an alliance fraught with peril starts out of the tomb to which our greatest statesman had consigned it, and, luring France with Italy towards it, nearly drags Great Britain at its wheels; when out-of-doors fanatics, utterly unversed in all the elements of history and of policy, are endeavouring to fan a war between the Crescent and the Cross, the noble Earl the Secretary of State is not entitled to forego the aid which Parliament can offer him because a section of political opponents may be ready to deprive him of it. The conflict in which he is engaged abroad, although a proud, is an unequal one.

In referring to the concert of the three Powers on June 26th the noble Lord the former Ambassador at St. Petersburg (Lord Napier and Ettrick) did not hesitate to tell your Lordships that the Holy Alliance had been set up again for revolutionary purposes. But an authority more grave, more elevated than the late Ambassador at St. Petersburg, had even

* Mr. Gladstone's Government.

previously come forward to interpret it. On this point I shall, as far as possible, avoid every phrase which scrupulous diplomats would cavil at. But many of your Lordships must have seen during the first fortnight of December a speech which came from the Russian Czar himself—it was everywhere published—in which it was proclaimed that the three Emperors had re-established the alliance of their predecessors, with a view to the objects for which it was originally formed. Such a speech ought, of course, to be regarded as the emanation of a council. The Sovereign of Russia is not like public men, who, having nobody to tell them what to say, must often fall into imprudences, however great their effort to avoid them. It is worth while, therefore, to remember for what purposes that system was designed, which can only be judged by seeing of what purposes it was the instrument.

My Lords, that system overthrew the Polish nationality ; after a long interval it crushed the hopes of every patriot in Italy ; it despatched in 1823 a French army to Madrid, against the ineffectual voice of Parliament and the Foreign Office ; in 1826 it imposed upon Great Britain the necessity of sending an expedition for the defence of Portugal into the Tagus ; and, last of all, by trampling on everything settled at Vienna, it put an end to the republic of Cracow in 1847. These were its performances and purposes, and such a memory as that of the noble Earl the Secretary of State without more accurate description can recall them.

My Lords, will the noble Earl, whose part it is to grapple with that system, wantonly decline, as far as possible, to arm himself against it ? What is the defence the Resolution offers—if adopted—and what the armour it secures ? My Lords, I wish to meet that question with precision. The noble Earl has had already to withstand demands from those three Powers, which he regarded as subversive of or injurious to Ottoman stability. If such [a Resolution becomes the

voice of Parliament, or even of your Lordships, demands of the same kind will be less likely to recur, and if they do recur, will be more easy to encounter.

My Lords, the essence of the case resides in that position. It would therefore be against my object, by dwelling upon other topics, to efface it. I have had to choose between two dangers : the danger of oppressing or exhausting the House by the materials which must occur to any one whose thoughts during the last two years have been directed to the subject ; the danger of appearing to present considerations which may be, not unconvincing, but inadequate, when you look to the magnitude of the interests at stake, of the commotions which environ us. I resolved to choose the latter danger, because the argument will not, I hope, depend on me.

In this House there are present some whose blood was shed or whose lives were risked in the Crimea. There are present some to whom at least the names of Balaclava and Inkerman suggest the thoughts with which they ought to be connected. There are present some who recollect the objects for which the war was undertaken, the Treaties which closed it, and who are convinced of the necessity of guarding them at present. I leave the subject in their hands, and if they concur with me that Parliament has now a duty to perform, I engage them, more effectually than I have done, to urge and encourage its performance.

At the close of the debate :—

I regret to be obliged to ask the indulgence of the House for a few minutes ; but it was not to be supposed that a question of this kind could be immediately disposed of. And, first, let me return my thanks to the noble Lord the former Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, and the noble Lord who has just retired from the House, for the qualified support which they have given to the Motion.

The noble Earl the former Secretary of State (Earl Granville) said that it dissatisfied him, but did not proceed to specify a single point on which he could object to it. When the noble Earl is dissatisfied with any Resolution, and yet is utterly unable to impugn it, or overthrow the grounds on which it stands, it clearly has a good deal to recommend it. If the noble Earl thought the terms of the Resolution badly chosen, while its sense was just, why could he not have offered an Amendment, which, had it been consistent with the general idea, I should not have resisted when it came from such a quarter?

The noble Earl entered into a long defence of the proceedings in 1871 for the revision of the Treaty of March 30th, 1856. And as they had scarcely been alluded to to-night, he certainly betrayed an uneasy conscience in defending them.

I now come to the noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby), who told the House, in reference to what had fallen from me, that he had heard an after-dinner speech in favour of his health when he desired to hear a criticism of his policy. My Lords, I never listened to a phrase in either House of Parliament more thoroughly devoid of generosity and delicacy. Is any one to be the object of derisive taunts, because he has not dwelt on the errors of the noble Earl, when a question wholly separate and different, a question much more practical and grave, was brought before your Lordships? The question before the House was, and is, whether or not to adopt a Resolution tending to the repose of Europe and the maintenance of treaties? And the noble Earl complains because, in restricting myself to this high and important ground, I have not touched on the reproaches to which the Government are open.

What degree of accusation does he call for? Supposing I admitted that for the union of the three Powers in October 1874 the inertness of the Foreign Office is exclusively

responsible, would he be satisfied? Supposing I admitted—as I did last Session—that the loss of Austria as an ally may be attributed to his proceedings, would he be contented? Supposing I went further, and remarked that he ought not to have participated in the mission of the Consuls to Mostar, and thus encouraged the insurgents, would he acquit me? If I advanced another step, and urged that he ought never to have subscribed to the Andrassy Note, whose consequences are now before the world, should I respond to that appetite for criticism which it appears that in my former speech I left unsatisfied this evening? Or must I go so far as to maintain that, while he holds his present office, there is very little chance, in my opinion, that the balance of the world will be restored; or the reforms essential to the cause of Ottoman integrity established? I shall if he requires it.

My Lords, in asking and expecting me to withdraw the Resolution, the noble Earl has shown but little penetration, when, to speak against it, he was driven to the frivolous and feeble pretext that it contained expressions of defiance—a view which nobody who read its terms could possibly accede to. It was not lightly framed; it has not been precipitately offered. To withdraw it would not be consistent with the duty which I owe to others out of doors, or to myself, or to your Lordships. The Government must either negative, accept, or move the Previous Question on it. If you negative it, you proclaim to the world that you are hostile to the European races of the Porte, and to the Treaties which enable you to come forward on the subject. If you move the Previous Question, you place the House of Lords in an ambiguous and not a satisfactory position. Whatever course is taken, the noble Earl will have no more success in urging me to withdraw the Resolution than he has had as yet in urging the three Powers to withdraw from one another.

February 20th, 1877.

TURKEY.

ADDRESS FOR A PAPER.

MY LORDS,—The noble Marquess who has just sat down (the Marquess of Bath) has revealed with an astounding frankness the programme of those who wish to invade the Porte for the advantage of its subjects, and who have in the noble Duke from whom the Motion came (the Duke of Argyll), so prominent a leader. Whatever may be thought of the course the noble Duke has taken or the language he has used, to one kind of praise he is entitled—the praise of absolute consistency upon the Eastern Question. The noble Duke has not frequently addressed the House or other audiences upon it. He made a speech during the Cretan Insurrection which he appears to have entirely forgotten, together with the events which drew it forth, as he maintained to-night that the Sublime Porte since the Crimean war had been enjoying absolute repose. That speech is said to have been remarkable for its declamatory eloquence; but it provoked the severe censure of the late Lord Derby, who had as Prime Minister to notice it, on the ground that it was calculated, proceeding from a quarter so authoritative, to promote the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which could not be conveniently replaced.

Last autumn the noble Duke joined an agitation—and I agree with him that public meetings upon foreign questions may be occasionally, although they cannot often be, excused—an agitation of which the avowed tendency was not only to coerce the Porte, but to dislodge it.

On February 8th the noble Duke electrified mankind—your Lordships, as he explained, being a “European house-top” when he rises to address you—by the statement that all insurrections against the Porte are justifiable, no matter what their object or origin; and that the Sultan is not entitled to the allegiance of his subjects. And here one cannot help remarking how consummate is the wisdom, how deep the statesmanship to which men may gradually arrive if they are only long enough surrounded by a council. The mind of the noble Duke, extensive as it is, could not alone have seized a truth so hidden and so priceless.

To-day the noble Duke comes down to explain that Great Britain ought to go to war with a Power she is bound by treaty to defend. These four speeches might all be brought together. Their harmony is perfect. But I am not convinced that their author will be accepted as a fair exponent of Liberal opinion on the subject, or as an organ of the Party which Lord Palmerston directed in the path of reforming and upholding that Empire which the noble Duke may possibly destroy, but which after the language he has held he retains a slender prospect of ameliorating.

There seem to be but two considerations urged in favour of a policy so violent: one that the Porte has assumed an indefensible position in resisting the last suggestions of the Conference; the other that, unless coercion of some kind happens, the labours of the Conference are sterile, while it is incumbent on the State to render them productive.

It would not be convenient now to approach so large a question as the policy or impolicy of what the Conference agreed in finally maintaining. The vindication of the Porte has been delivered in a shape the most official and elaborate—it has been delivered in their Circular of January 25th. Has the noble Duke replied to it? I am not aware that he alluded to it. There never was a State Paper more entitled

to attention, in point of dignity, of moderation, and of argument. Those who do not take the trouble to confront it have no kind of *locus standi* against the Power whose conclusion it defends.

As to the second point, admitting that the labours of the Conference were bound to be productive, they may easily be shown to have been far less sterile than the noble Duke imagines. They did much to prevent the occupation of Bulgaria, which hung over Europe as a menace in the middle of the autumn. Their influence, no doubt, advanced the measure of the Turkish Constitution. Besides, they brought about—although without design—an interregnum of diplomacy upon the Bosphorus. For this result alone the noble Marquess the late Plenipotentiary (the Marquess of Salisbury) would be entitled to the lasting gratitude of the people whom he visited. To explain the impression thoroughly is not consistent with the reticence I should desire to preserve, in spite of rather opposite examples; but noble lords can reason for themselves upon it and judge how far it is well-founded.

Having alluded to the Turkish Constitution, I cannot help referring to a most extraordinary statement with regard to it, which during the Session has come from the Bench beneath and which tends to give a pretext to that aggression on the Porte to which we are invited. It has been denounced as a political manoeuvre, improvised to baffle the united delegates of Europe.

To such a version I am not disqualified for giving an emphatic contradiction. During the autumn of 1875, when no Conference was meditated, the friends of Midhat Pasha had resolved to advocate a system of this character. That distinguished man withdrew from office because his programme of reform was then deemed unacceptable. It fell to my lot to approach him during his retreat, sufficiently to know that whenever he again directed public matters some kind of

constitution must arise to check the power of the Sultan. If no insurrection had taken place in Herzegovina, if we had never heard of an Andrassy Note or Berlin Memorandum, the set of men whom I allude to would some day have enforced the convictions they had gradually arrived at.

The version I protest against is more extraordinary when it comes from men who aspire to be the representatives of Liberal opinion in the country. Sympathy with nascent constitutions, imperfect as they may be, untried as they must be, is among the permanent traditions of the Party. Such constitutions have always been the object of lenient criticism, of prompt support, of generous encouragement among the Party, from the days of Mr. Fox to our own. Those who now deride them and discredit them forget the essence of the school in which they call themselves Leaders.

I will not detain your Lordships. I rose only because the speech of the noble Duke appeared to me to be calculated to promote hostilities, unless on this side the House it was in some degree resisted. The noble Duke demands aggression on the Porte. Might he not insist upon a war with Portugal? Portugal is a not less ancient ally. Might he not require an expedition against Belgium? We are but bound by treaty to defend her. According to this system, when we have decimated our allies, should we proceed to act against our Colonies? Would a campaign against the West Indies be sufficient for the noble Duke? or would nothing less than a *coup de main* against the Executive and Parliament of Ottawa content him? If Great Britain is to be arrayed against the Ottoman Empire, how soon may we expect a dangerous expedition from the North, of which the noble Duke would be the leader? These propositions are not much more violent than that which we have heard—and scarcely more irrational.

If you really want to effect certain changes in European Turkey, the path is clear; the means are tangible before you.

The British Embassy, when properly restored, has only to assert superiority to every other influence based on your fidelity to treaties—which since Lord Stratford de Redcliffe left Constantinople has never been done—and there is not a single feasible idea in the Imperial decree of 1839, or that of 1856, or that of 1875, which may not be translated into practice. By going back to duty you may reach the point the noble Duke would gain by moving forward to perdition.

My Lords, in a few days I hope to bring before the House a Motion which aims at peace as decidedly as that of the noble Duke aspires to a rupture. I venture to engage the noble Lords who are opposed to me to deliver their speeches now, and those who think as I do to reserve them to the time when they may influence your Lordships.

February 26th, 1877.

TURKEY.—THE TREATIES OF 1856—1871.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD CAMPBELL rose to call attention to the Correspondence upon Turkey ; and to move—

“ That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that Her Majesty will adopt such measures as appear to be the best calculated to prevent hostilities, to secure adherence to the Treaties of March 30th and April 15th, 1856, so far as the Conference of 1871 has re-established them, and to promote the welfare of the races subject to the Ottoman Empire.”

Those who had followed the course of events during the last few months would have observed that the line of action taken by the European Powers did not go beyond the preservation of peace. Now he contended that the Treaties of March 30th, and April 15th, 1856, as they were modified by the Conference of the Powers of 1871, were still binding. He had observed that during the last fortnight it had become the fashion to assert that the Tripartite Treaty of 1856 was inoperative, inasmuch as England was not obliged to interpose unless called upon by France and Austria to act. Now, it was tolerably certain that this contingency would never happen, and therefore it was a foregone conclusion that this Treaty was null and of no effect. But he (Lord Campbell) altogether disputed that position.

Vattel had laid down a whole series of principles for deciding doubtful cases similar to that now pending: he denied that unless the other contracting parties to a treaty called upon a third party to it to act, the treaty was void and of non-effect; he said that no single contracting party had a right to interpret a treaty at its own pleasure; again, that every interpretation that led to an absurdity was to be rejected; and again, that such an interpretation as would render a treaty null and without effect was inadmissible, and that it must be so interpreted as to give it its effect, so that it should not be vain and illusory. And Lord Palmerston had left in writing his opinion that treaties could not be rendered null and void by such a process as that, and had contended that no party to a treaty was at liberty to make it null and void at its own pleasure. And the last principle laid down by Vattel which he should cite was, that if either of the contracting parties could and ought to have explained himself, and had not done so, it must be to his own damage. These principles lay at the root of the present question.

Great Britain, as the most interested and the most determined Power in the Eastern Question, was entitled to address France and Austria, calling upon them to join her in enforcing it. The Treaty, therefore, was in full force. If there should be no response to that appeal—or a negative response—a question would arise; but on that he would not hazard an opinion just now, as that question had not yet arisen. But if France and Austria were hopelessly incapable of interference, the idea suggested itself that Great Britain had not exerted her proper influence in the councils of the world; but no one except in sarcasm or pleasantry would contend that feebleness of policy dissolved the strength of treaty obligations.

The remark of the noble Duke the other night, to the effect that treaties were to be exposed to the destructive criticism of

these days, was one which neither Parliament nor the public would countenance. He believed that, remembering the way in which many years ago the noble Earl now at the head of the Government (the Earl of Beaconsfield) vindicated the guarantee to Schleswig, the country might rest assured that he would uphold the integrity of treaties.

It was argued by some persons that the Bulgarian atrocities had relieved this country of her engagements towards Turkey. The misapprehension on that point had perhaps subsided. Then it was said that the refusal of the Turks to adopt the recommendations of the Conference had completely put an end to those engagements. He accepted the Conference, though many persons of great sagacity condemned it. It had a tendency to put an end to the Holy Alliance by dividing or submerging that alliance ; it had a tendency to accelerate the action of the Porte and to check arbitrary power, and it had prevented the occupation of any part of the Ottoman territory. It was a rainbow after a very long storm, and if it did not make it, extended the armistice.

The Prime Minister had told the House that the refusal of the Porte was imprudent. On that point he would reserve his opinion altogether ; in a few weeks we should be better able to tell. But granting by way of hypothesis that it was imprudent, if all the proper steps had not been taken to prevent that refusal, the responsibility would rest, not with the Porte, but with Great Britain, and our Treaty obligations were left untouched.

If their Lordships referred to page 43 of the Blue-book, they would find a despatch from Lord Augustus Loftus, in which he stated that Prince Gortchakoff was of opinion that the Conference should be attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the respective Powers, as the sending of delegates who would have to refer to their Governments would tend to delay. That was so far back as August 15th. Had the

counsel of Prince Gortchakoff been acted upon, great results might have followed.

In the first place England would have been represented at the Conference by the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (the Earl of Derby). He need not say that he had great respect for the ability of the noble Marquess who acted as Special Plenipotentiary ; but the noble Marquess was an utter stranger to the Turks, while the noble Earl was well known to them : he had their confidence during the Cretan insurrection ; and though some of his proceedings since their present troubles had displeased them as being characterised by too much caution, that confidence he still retained, and they knew that he disliked war. Then the arrangement suggested by Prince Gortchakoff would have prevented the presence of General Ignatieff at the Conference. Everybody who knew anything of these matters was aware that at Constantinople General Ignatieff was associated with various calamities to Turkey, and that so recently as May last he found it necessary to surround the Embassy with armed men and retire for a while from the Turkish capital. That General Ignatieff led the Conference to a great extent was clear from the Blue-books, and from his own valedictory speech to that assembly.

The adoption of the suggestion of Prince Gortchakoff would have led to the introduction into the Conference of influences likely to win concessions from the Porte, while it would have hindered the entrance into it of a man whose presence must have been a strong impediment to such concessions. In fact, it was inevitable that any Conference at which General Ignatieff took part was doomed to failure. He could not but think that for the failure of the Conference the Porte had no responsibility, and that in consequence the refusal of the Porte to the terms proposed by the Powers had not invalidated the Treaties.

The agitation arising from the Bulgarian atrocities had led

to intervention on the part of the country, which intervention was first manifested in the despatch of September 21st. In that despatch intervention was carried to a pitch unheard of in the annals of diplomacy. Therefore, now, if we had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of Turkey, we had the same right in respect of Portugal and Belgium. A right to interfere depended on an engagement to defend ; and when the engagement to defend was given up, the right of interference would fall with it. When interference occurred the engagement to defend became more binding ; and it might be said that the despatch of September 21st surrounded with a solid and impenetrable armour our engagement to defend. But for our treaties we should have no more right to interfere between Turkey and her subjects than we had to interfere with the Government of France and the Communists, or the North Americans and the Red Indians, or the Russians and Siberia.

It was said—or assumed rather—that treaties fell with the policy with which they originated, and that since the policy which we upheld by force of arms in 1854 had changed, the treaties which were the result of that policy had come to an end. On the contrary, he maintained that every object for which in 1854 we resolved to defend the Bosphorus continued at this moment, and that in the lapse of time those objects had been further developed. Twenty years ago, if Russia had become a great Mediterranean Power, there would have been still the united navies of France and Great Britain to counteract her. It was known, at the time to which he was referring, that those two navies formed one consolidated element. We were at present near a precipice of war or dishonour.

A few years ago we changed the depository of power in this country, and we had now a body of electors on whom taxation did not fall so generally and so heavily as it did on the electoral body created by the Act in 1832. What the sentiments of the present constituency would be in case of a war might

be presumed from the feeling of the electoral body of 1832, who after fighting in the Crimea were not willing to conclude peace with Russia as soon as the Government were. Among the masses of the people of this country there was anti-Russian feeling ; but he admitted the exercise of naval and military power by this country was not desirable, and that our only course of action was to endeavour to prevent hostilities in Europe and Asia.

There was an impression abroad, and especially in Russia, that the whole body of the Liberal Party in this country had become Russian partisans. The circumstances that had given rise to that feeling were so manifest that he would not trouble their Lordships by pointing them out. Of course, it was well known that the Liberals were not in power, and that there was no chance of their arriving at it ; but their social and political importance gave much weight to the opinion which they were supposed to entertain on the Eastern Question.

But, if such an opinion was entertained, it was clear that Russia, with such an element at her back, might be much more disposed to engage in an aggressive policy than she otherwise might be. No doubt the impression as to the sentiment of the Liberal Party was unfounded. The history of that party showed it to be so. In 1791 Mr. Fox opposed the Russian armament. At the time of the second Partition of Poland, in 1815, and at the time when the Holy Alliance was formed, the Liberal Party manifested strong anti-Russian tendencies. These were displayed again at the time of the Polish war in 1830, and at the time of the Russian intervention against Hungary in 1848. At last that Party determined to wage war against Russia in 1854, though Mr. Cobden in the House of Commons, and a noble Lord now sitting on the cross benches (Earl Grey), used all their efforts to prevent that war from being undertaken.

After the Crimean war, the Liberal Party being in power, Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell, in 1863, united in a diplomatic combination against Russia in the interests of Poland. Up to the time when the Bulgarian atrocities became known there had been no suspicion that the Liberal Party was on the side of Russia ; but after the vague and exaggerated language which had been used since then it was no wonder that the politicians of St. Petersburg should have arrived at the conclusion—though it was one altogether unfounded—that the Party which had by development become more and more of a barrier to their aggression had suddenly gone over to the opposite extreme.

The Russian politicians, no doubt, thought that Providence had intervened in their favour, and that an aggressive policy might be resumed with impunity when so great and historical a barrier to their aggressions had been removed. He ventured to think that a Motion such as that of which he had given notice, coming from the Opposition side of the House, would tend to dissipate that illusion. He regretted that it was not in the hands of some one of more importance than himself—he should have liked to see it in the hands of such a personage as Lord Napier and Ettrick ; but its adoption by the Party would give it all the weight desirable for such a Motion.

He wished to refrain from criticism of the Government, for in politics, as well as art, he had always been of opinion that criticism soared and execution grovelled. But as on a former occasion he refrained from criticism, and consequently found himself between taunts on the one side and smouldering satisfaction on the other, he wished to refer to some parts of these proceedings as furnishing a new basis for argument for his Motion. He thought many fantastic approvals and unwarrantable charges had been brought against the Ministers.

The first error which it occurred to him might be charged

against them was, that so far back as 1874 no efforts seemed to have been made to avert the union of the three Northern Powers which began in the autumn. Another deficiency, more than an error, in his opinion, was that during the February, March and April of last year, no exertions seem to have been made in order to win over to our views the authorities at Berlin. A third objection he had to make came from the Blue-books. He found that in the despatches the noble Earl had used expressions which he could not but deem imprudent. The noble Earl—no doubt with the best intentions—had indulged in statements that in no case was he prepared to act upon the Treaties. He could not help thinking that such language had a tendency to lure Russia into a warlike attitude. The effect of this language had been in some degree counteracted by the speech of the Prime Minister on November 9th. The prestige of the British Government required to be increased among diplomatists if war was to be averted. He would recommend his Motion as having a tendency to give them more distinctly that prestige of which they stood in need. If war between Russia and the Porte broke out, they would have to choose between a dangerous course and a humiliating attitude, and therefore the true line of policy for this country was to prevent hostilities in Europe or in Asia, and no amount of indifference from the bench below or on the part of the Russian party in this country ought to bar their acquiescence in the Motion.

He could not deny, from some of the contradictory opinions which had been expressed, that contradictory opinions existed among the members of the Government; there was a certain variation of language and expression. He might therefore be permitted to express opinions he would otherwise reserve as to the position of the country and the steps which most required to be taken on this subject.

The first stage he would venture to suggest was that the

excited hordes who had invaded the precincts of the Eastern Question in the interest of Russia should be driven out. They told the country that they were its concentrated intellect—he would retort upon them that they were the condensed servility and embodied madness of the country.

The next step was, that the line, whatever it might be, that governed the foreign policy at the time of the Berlin Memorandum should re-establish its ascendancy in the Cabinet. His view was that it was the duty of the Government to proclaim their adherence to the Treaties so far and so long as Parliament enabled them to do it. The only basis upon which they were entitled to ask for a single shred of Ottoman reform was founded on the advantages we had secured for Turkey by the blood and treasure we had poured out like water in the Crimean war.

It was with perfect confidence that he submitted his Motion to the House, and with the firm conviction that it would secure the precedence of which they stood in need, the mind and disposition without which that precedence would be useless.

The noble Lord concluded by moving for an Address.

At the close of the debate :—

My Lords,—As no one else, to my regret, has risen to address the House, I am compelled to do so for a few minutes before the question is disposed of. The speech of the noble Earl (the Earl of Wemyss) on the cross benches may have, I trust, a good effect both here and elsewhere, as it shows how little the races subject to the Porte could gain by the dominion with which it is intended to replace it.

The noble Earl has not given his concurrence to the Motion. He is not in the habit of giving motions his concurrence. It

is not consistent with his habits—it may be his principles—to do so. Some adverse criticism upon his part ought not to disturb any one who makes a proposition to your Lordships. As to the noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby), he has not failed to see that no want of confidence whatever in the Government is implied in the Address, the terms of which he is not able to object to.

It would not suit the pleasure of the House were I to go through all the series of remarks the noble Earl the Secretary of State has made upon my former statement, but I cannot avoid saying that the leading arguments by which it was attempted to prove that if adopted the Motion would at least reduce the prospect of hostilities have been entirely unanswered.

The noble Earl considers the view I based upon the history of the Conference, as absolving the Ottoman authorities from all responsibility for the failure which ensued, to be too minute in its foundation. It was not grandiose indeed, as regards the facts alluded to, but it by no means follows that it was inconclusive upon that account.

A larger and more striking vindication of the Porte might very possibly be given. But as it must involve attack upon the propositions the noble Marquess the late Plenipotentiary (the Marquess of Salisbury) might feel required to defend, and his defence of which would not at all contribute to the peace of Europe at this moment, I determined to avoid it. It may be requisite to say a word on the pungent observations which the noble Duke on the bench beneath (the Duke of Argyll) has left the House after delivering. The noble Duke had nothing to advance against the Motion, but he complains much of the revision it has gone through. It is not at all irregular to revise a Motion up to the time it finally appears. It would have been competent to me to give no notice at all until the last night when the House was sitting. But as to

the surmise of the noble Duke that the phrase "to improve the welfare of the races subject to the Ottoman Empire" was only due to the inspiration of another mind, my answer is a very easy one. It is taken almost verbatim from the Motion I submitted to your Lordships on July 31st, when the noble Duke was altogether absent, and when his zeal upon the Eastern Question had by no means risen to the formidable height at which it is now standing.

As to the Motion, I decline absolutely to withdraw it. Such a course would involve me in too much responsibility, if events take the turn it is our object to prevent: unless it is accepted, which it ought to be, the Government shall have the task of acting with regard to it. They have the fullest information. They have the strongest motives to adopt the course which is least calculated to precipitate hostilities.

April 19th, 1877.

TURKEY.

ADDRESS FOR DOCUMENTS.

LORD CAMPBELL rose to call attention to the recent circumstances of the Eastern Question, and to move for copies of all the Imperial decrees, capitulations and conventions of any kind which entitle Great Britain to intervene against abuses in the government of the Porte and in favour of the races subject to it, without reference to the Treaties formed after the Crimean war for upholding the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

The noble Lord said that he could not but think that the postponement of his notice on a former occasion had been beneficial, inasmuch as it had given the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the opportunity of thoroughly searching the archives of the Foreign Office—so that he would now probably be more completely able to answer his inquiries than he would have been had he brought on his Motion the previous day.

The object of the Motion was to ascertain whether, if the Treaties of 1856 were to be considered as of no effect, we had any legitimate foundation for intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. It might be argued that before those Treaties we had interfered in the affairs of the Porte. No doubt that was the case—especially at the time when Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was our Ambassador at Constantinople; but then it should be remembered that during the whole of

that time we had interfered either as a defending Power or a Power ready to defend.

It was far from his intention to deny the probability of war in existing circumstances ; but still peace was not as yet to be despairs of. The influence of Great Britain at Berlin, and even at St. Petersburg, might not be altogether exhausted. As Louis Philippe once said, there was a great difference between contemplating a war and actually levying war ; and in the present instance there was one favourable circumstance which was not present previous to the Crimean war—namely, that no personal ambition was at work. No effort which might have the effect of preserving peace ought to be left untried ; but if war actually occurred, their Lordships would agree with him in the proposition that it was most desirable that all ambiguity about the treaty obligations of this country should be put an end to.

The immediate and practical obligations of the country were embodied in a Treaty of April 1856, and in reference to that Treaty he would call in as arbiter between those who had differed as to its interpretation Lord Odo Russell, our Ambassador at Berlin. The noble Lord—then Mr. Russell—had been sent on a special mission to Versailles during the Franco-German war. In a despatch written at Versailles at that time Lord Odo distinctly averred as his opinion that when the event provided for by the Treaty arose we were bound to engage in war in defence of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, with or without either France or Austria. It occurred to him that there could be no more decided refutation of the new fantastic theory that the Treaty of 1856 had no force unless we were called upon to fulfil its obligations by France and Austria. It was impossible to foresee the causes which might induce France or Austria to hold back : the circumstances of France being disabled, or Austria being unprepared, were the cases contemplated by Lord Odo Russell.

It might be found that adherence to the Treaty was less hazardous than at first it would appear. It engaged this country to concert measures with the Porte in a certain eventuality.

The first step, therefore, would be an easy one; and if we made and carried out an offer of assistance to the Porte, several advantages would follow from it. By the use of our naval power the Treaty would be sufficiently adhered to, and the presence of our fleet in the Bosphorus would have this effect: it would restore and preserve order in Constantinople; it would secure time for the development of the new constitution; it would baffle a descent on Constantinople from the Asiatic side, and would do a great deal towards preventing a descent from the European side; it would release the commander of the Turkish navy, Hobart Pasha, for operations in the Black Sea, which would not otherwise be possible; and it would give us a *locus standi* for making an appeal to Austria to fulfil her treaty obligations in the matter; and it would save British interests by making it impossible for Russia to occupy Constantinople.

Another most important question was: What would be our future policy in regard to the Mediterranean? No doubt the consideration of those points had occurred to the Government. The point upon which it seemed to him most necessary to say a few words was not as regarded those probable results, but as to whether there were not some obstructions at that moment which rendered it impossible for the Government to carry out their treaties. Now, how could that be known? The mode by which the voice of the country was arrived at was by a general election of members of Parliament; and what election had declared that the results of the Crimean war ought to be abandoned, and its greatest advantages reversed?

As regarded Parliament, immense majorities, recruited from

both sides, were ready to support the policy of those Treaties. Some persons had referred to the meetings throughout the country : generally speaking, these meetings had very little authority ; but amongst the many which had been held only one had recorded conclusions against the Treaties, and that was the one at St. James's Hall—from which the public were excluded—at which meeting it seemed to him that philosophers had left their sense behind them, and to which professors did not bring their erudition. Let it be granted that there had been errors, were Great Britain and Europe to be punished for them ? The conclusion was absurd.

It was next assumed that the Porte had not followed the counsels of the Allies. But could it be said with truth that the Porte had not done so ? During the insurrection in Herzegovina did she not follow their counsel in accepting the Andrassy Note ? Did she refuse the Berlin Memorandum ? Did she not act in accordance with the feeling of Europe in deposing a corrupt, tyrannical and arbitrary Government ? Was the Sublime Porte acting against counsels offered by Allies, to whom she was bound to listen, in granting a constitutional *régime* ? Had she acted against the wishes of any Ally entitled to her reverence ?

There were only two occasions on which it could be said that the Porte had declined to follow the counsels of her Allies. She repelled the propositions of the Conference, and she objected to the language of the Protocol. But in one case the hand of Russia was apparent, and in the other case it was proclaimed. In either case it was apparent that if the Porte accepted Russia's schemes—even though they should be discussed as British propositions—she would be entering upon her destruction, and in refusing these proposals Turkey had avoided that suicide against which the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in answering some of the autumnal deputations, thought it right to warn her.

He felt quite convinced that the more closely the noble Earl the Foreign Secretary reflected upon what had taken place during the past two years, the more distinctly would he perceive that those two occasions were the only ones on which such a sweeping accusation could be founded against Turkey. Therefore, unless the schemes of Russia were more skilfully disguised than they had been hitherto, we had no right to be astonished that they should continue to meet with the same reception from Turkey that they had met with hitherto.

Then another obstacle had been often referred to, and it was that of a great authority—the ex-Prime Minister. It was said that no policy could be followed while the ex-Prime Minister opposed it. That was a most extraordinary doctrine. What would be the effect of a change of Government if the outgoing Prime Minister assumed, without responsibility of office, the duty of dictating the policy of his successor? What was the tenor of the last general election? It was that the country, when challenged by himself, by overwhelming majorities decided that he should not guide it any longer—not even in finance, in which he was so great a master. Would any one, then, maintain so laughable a proposition as that the result of that election was to enthrone the right hon. gentleman over foreign affairs, in which he was a novice? Was the design of the electors at the last general election to render the right hon. gentleman omnipotent in respect of calamities for which he was sufficiently responsible?

But it was said that no harm would arise from an attempted occupation of the Turkish provinces by Russia. It was against the laws of Nature and Providence to anticipate any desirable result without making any efforts to attain it. If an enemy were on his way to invade the English shores, would it not be madness to conclude that his attempt would be harmless, because, without any exertion of ours, the winds, or famine, or some other such cause, would destroy his forces?

If Russia saw that we had done nothing, and had abandoned treaties, whether she failed or succeeded, the dishonour of sacrificing treaties would fall on ourselves. If a country were struggling with insolvency, or under some necessity by which its resources were impaired, he would not urge that the abnegation of a treaty should not be pardoned ; but there was not a shadow of excuse for ignominiously avoiding it. He should not, however, think it unsatisfactory if, by the effacement of the Treaty of 1856, despatches like that of September became impossible.

The noble Lord concluded by moving for the production of the documents to which he had referred.

July 19th, 1877.

RUSSIA AND THE PORTE — THE CIRCULAR DESPATCH OF THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT

MOTION FOR PAPERS.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the progress of the war between Russia and the Porte, and to move for a copy of any answer from Her Majesty's Government to the Circular Despatch of the Ottoman Government to its representatives abroad, dated January 25th, said :—

My Lords,—It will not, I think, be difficult to explain in a few words a change of form which is apparent in the Notice I have given. The despatch from the Ottoman Government of January 25th is one of the most important which late events have drawn out, because it contains, elaborately stated, their reasons for declining the last proposals of the Conference, and, at the same time, a sketch of the alternatives they offered.

My impression was, after a good deal of research, that it had never reached us, except by foreign journals; but it now appears in the fifteenth Paper on the East, long after many things which ought to have succeeded it. But this is a small matter, so long as the despatch itself is not entirely unnoticed. I am far from urging that the Government were bound to answer it, although I move for any answer they have made. If they have made none, it stands intact as a reply to all the grounds on which the aggressive war against the Porte has been excused.

Having given notice also to call attention to the progress

of the war, the House will possibly allow me to make some further observations, which events, as they move on, might soon render irrelevant. To justify the term aggressive as applied to the part of Russia—a term which some may disapprove—let me take refuge in the reply of the Government to Prince Gortchakoff, dated May 1st. A document more grave, as I think more conclusive, has never left the Foreign Office. It is pointed out, with more or less detail in it, that the Russian declaration violates the Treaty of 1856, and mocks the principle laid down in 1871; that the Porte was not bound to signify its acquiescence in the Protocol; that the pretension of the Czar to represent the views and interests of Europe was altogether inadmissible.

One point the reply of the Government omitted, as it was not, perhaps, desirable to lengthen it. It is the fact, as stated by Lord Augustus Loftus in a despatch of April 6th, that Russia insisted on a manifesto from the Porte, after the Protocol had been imparted. Had it been otherwise, the Porte would have been responsible for the manifesto which appeared. But we learn from Lord Augustus Loftus that neither silence nor evasion, nor even verbal statement, was left open. A manifesto seemed to be insisted upon, because a pretext for invasion was essential. The manifesto was elicited, and the invasion was commenced.

Every one may thus be led to see that the aggression was unwarrantable; but it requires greater patience to observe that it is much more unwarrantable than those of 1828 and 1853. In 1828, besides other pleas, the Russian Government had certain topics of complaint against the Porte as regards the imperfect execution of a Treaty—namely, that of Bucharest. When the present war began the conduct of the Porte involved no wrong, however shadowy, to Russia. In 1853 the Czar Nicholas was, in some degree, invoked to protect the Greeks against the Latins at Jerusalem. Russia has not been

invited to her present task by any creed or interest whatever. The Exarch of Bulgaria never summoned her to cross the Danube. The Patriarch of Constantinople sends up open prayers for her discomfiture. The plea advanced is no equivalent to such a demand. When a Power has fomented insurrection in another country, and when that country has repressed it with wild, vindictive or even barbarous severity, the Power which fomented it can have no *locus standi* of indictment, although other Powers may be qualified to claim one. The final cause of the atrocities cannot be the judge or the avenger of the crimes it has produced.

But neither in 1828 nor in 1853 could it be said that during the three previous years Russia had combined with other Powers against the Ottoman Empire. She had not then directed the subversive force of the Holy Alliance to any Eastern object. She had not made commercial treaties a lever to detach the vassal principalities from their allegiance. She had not armed, let loose, directed Servia in a rebellious war against the suzerain whose fortresses had been imprudently entrusted to it. She had not flung the Prince of Montenegro into the Herzegovinian strife to feed and to extend it; she had not for ten previous years employed at Constantinople a diplomatist, of great ability no doubt, and only true to his instructions, but now proved by uncontested documents to have laboured for the gradual dismemberment of the State to which he was accredited. Above all, at neither of those periods was Russia making war against a constitution recently inaugurated.

The just conclusion would therefore be, not only that the step of Russia cannot be defended, but that it assumes a darker hue than those which have immediately preceded it; although among the similar attempts in the last century, which Major Russell has enumerated, some might be found perhaps to rival it in blackness. Since April 24th it has gone

on unresisted, except so far as the armies of the Porte, the waters of the Danube, together with the insurrection in the Caucasus, have been able to retard it.

It is worth while to inquire briefly how far such a position can be deemed a satisfactory one. To maintain that it is not satisfactory implies no strong reflection on Her Majesty's Government. Their attitude may be the same as they described themselves at the beginning of the Session—namely, that of men who, anxious on conviction of their value to uphold the Treaties of 1856, find themselves impeded or discouraged by the faint support they get from some who were more immediately the authors of them. At the same time we must recall the fact that they are utterly unexecuted, while all the pretexts for neglecting them have long ago been answered. The Proclamation of Neutrality does little to facilitate adherence to them. In point of fact, it favours the belligerent whom they engage us to resist. It was not demanded by neutrality. In 1828, as far as I can learn, there was not such a proclamation. In 1853 there certainly was not, although neutrality continued from July, when Russia crossed the Pruth, down to March, when Great Britain became an actual belligerent. Sir Robert Phillimore explains, in his text-book, that a neutral is not bound to make a proclamation of the kind. You gain nothing by it. If it is desired to prevent British subjects mixing in the war, the Foreign Enlistment Act suffices. The proclamation only serves to flatter, where it is a duty to withstand.

Beyond that, if the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire are desirable, both are violently outraged. If, as some reasoners contend, it would be better to have a more enlightened, civilised, tenacious Power on the Bosphorus —whether its origin was Athens or Vienna, whether its type was federative or imperial, whether it was connected with the Protestant, the Greek or Latin form of Christianity—their hope

is perishing before them. To a solution of the kind, Russian arms, when they succeed, are an inexorable barrier. It will not become a fact, but it will even cease to be a vision.

But as soon as it is seen that the success of Russia would be a blow to Europe, we are forced to own that the Porte is making war for all the nations which abandon her.

However, there is yet a more striking point of view in which the present state of things can hardly be defended. The favourite aspiration of the moment is thrown overboard. The improvement of the races subject to the Porte, when it might have been triumphantly secured, is ruthlessly abandoned. If treaties were now observed even within narrow limits, and at little hazard or expense, no reform would be impossible. To defend the Porte is to control it. It is not any theory on my part. It stands on record that in 1854 and 1855 Lord Stratford de Redcliffe obtained concessions which at another time could scarcely have been granted, even to a mind so energetic and imperious.

If treaties were now observed, the ambassador would be capable of anything. He could appoint viceroys, organise tribunals, regulate finance, establish companies, overrule grand viziers, guide assemblies, restore ability to councils, and fling corruption out of palaces. As things stand, he is placed in a manner utterly deplorable. By long tradition he is forced to use the language which becomes the organ of a defending Power, while that Power is hardly making any preparation to defend. When he advises he is an unauthorised, unwelcome and importunate disturber; when he does not, he is an empty form, a ceremonial nonentity. It is no reproach to him whatever that it should be so. The fault belongs to those who keep the treaties unfulfilled. The result is incontestable. The British Embassy, which used to be the Mecca of the races no other Mecca lures towards it, is paralysed, in deference to men who hypocritically clamoured for their

benefit, but now throw off the mask which sat so cleverly upon them.

At no period would such a situation be desirable or acceptable. But we are forced to reflect upon the time at which it happens. It happens when the fate of Denmark in 1864, the concessions on the Black Sea in 1870, the sacrifice of public law at Washington more recently—even without reproaching the successive Governments who had to do with these transactions—required to be balanced and redeemed: when national decline in foreign policy at least had reached the lowest point compatible with safety, and when a rare and long-required opportunity is granted, to re-establish on its former height the lowered honour of the kingdom.

Remarks of this kind, without even pretending to do justice to the topic, far less to exhaust it, may yet provoke the question of what should now be done to put an end to a position so derogatory—a question which nothing but official knowledge can dispose of altogether. But without that knowledge one preliminary step might be adverted to. It is that of renouncing a set of improvised, of artificial and untenable opinions, framed, as it were, by order and design to reconcile the country to what would otherwise be viewed as insupportable. One is that Great Britain can depend on Austria for the exertion she is not willing to partake. A less bold interpretation might suggest that the Powers reciprocally paralyse each other, in a mode which happened to two commanders of an army at the end of the last century :—

“ Lord Chatham, with his sabre drawn,
Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strahan ;
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham.”

The next is that Egypt might indemnify Great Britain for anything which happened on the Dardanelles or Bosphorus—the very bait which more than twenty years ago was

prudently rejected. If one point is better settled than another in discussions on the Eastern Question, it is that Egypt will always gravitate to the Power which has Constantinople, and that without such gravitation the Power which has Constantinople would move towards it and appropriate it. But I leave that topic to men who have commanded armies, or men who may command them.

Another of these idols which darken policy at present is that Russian aggression has any predetermined limit. Nothing can be urged in its defence except that in 1829 Russia did not go beyond Adrianople. But why did she not go farther? Count Moltke, the eminent historian of the campaign, has thoroughly explained it. It was not a matter of forbearance or diplomacy. Disease among the troops imposed a limitation on their progress.

But of all fallacies, which rage like epidemics in the air, the most pernicious in its natural effects is, that after doing nothing in the war we shall be able to step in and to control negotiations for a settlement. There is not one example in modern times to justify the fatuous assumption. Not a grain of *à priori* reason can be offered to defend it. On several occasions its utter folly was illustrated. In 1866 Napoleon III., after neutrality, wished to influence the peace between Austria and Prussia. In spite of all the genius, reputation and pre-eminence which at that time he commanded, he had no more voice in the adjustment than the Prince of Monaco. In 1871 many European States were solicitous about the definite arrangements between Germany and France. They were no more heard upon them than the American Republic. There is a further illustration, which, although more distant as to time, comes home to us more forcibly. After the war between Russia and the Porte of 1828-9 the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen would have given anything to control negotiations. The whole course of their ideas has been brought

before the world in a recent volume, by the successor of one of them, so that there is no excuse for overlooking it. These two distinguished men reflected gravely on the Treaty of Adrianople. The despatch of the Earl of Aberdeen might be cited as a masterpiece against it. It does not appear, however, that they were able to revise a comma or to regulate a paragraph in the obnoxious stipulations against which they had protested. Men who look forward to such a power under such conditions have not learnt the alphabet of international affairs, or cannot draw an inference from the events which recent history might have forced upon their notice.

If these illusions, and some kindred ones I pass over, were removed, sounder principles would vindicate themselves, and proper measures might emerge, without any one being wanted to explain or recommend them. Their outline cannot be mistaken. The indispensable preliminary might be—in whatever manner we effect it—to regain the confidence and accord of the Sublime Porte itself, without which all operations of an effective nature are prohibited. That bar once removed, such movements appear to be desirable as would lead to no collision with any European Power, and yet would stifle the designs upon the Bosphorus, which are repudiated in despatches, but to which inaction on our part gives prolonged vitality and irresistible encouragement. The Embassy would then at once recover its authority. The pretexts of the war might be annihilated, not by the violence of Russia, but the counsels of Great Britain. When they were gone, it would be difficult to prevent the Governments of Europe from uniting in remonstrance with St. Petersburg, as they did in 1863 upon another subject. The balance of power might be restored, whether or not the war was quickly put an end to. At all events, the greatest influence would be secured in any Conference at which the ultimate arrangement of the Eastern Question might be handled.

As things are now going on, two alternatives confront us. We are moving either to the verge of a division between the three Powers, such as that which happened at the end of the last century; or to the verge of a conclusion between Russia and the Porte like that of 1833 at Unkiar Skelessi, when Russia gained a special right of entrance to the Dardanelles, and when, on Asiatic soil, the general indignity of Europe was recorded.

My Lords, it would betray a most imperfect estimate of things and men, which could not be excused at such a moment, for any one to dwell much—however cautiously—on practical suggestions. The difficulty is elsewhere. As to strategic methods of upholding our honour and our interest, the Government, I dare say, might listen three hours a day without hearing all the persons competent to offer them. The want is not in schemes, but resolution to adopt them in the face of what are deemed to be considerable obstacles. These obstacles are foreign and domestic. Although it is habitual to contemplate the latter, and to shrink before them, it seems to me they vanish when they are approached.

As to Parliament, in one House the Government have lately had a majority of 130 on the Eastern Question. As to agitation, it is now silenced. But the agitation which existed in the autumn was an agitation for peremptory interference with the Ottoman Empire. Interference of that kind, it has been long ago established, has no foundation but defence. It was in point of reason, therefore, an agitation for defence, and cannot render it impossible.

The late Government* have been referred to often as an obstacle. If, indeed, the late Government were a united body on the Eastern Question, they might powerfully urge some course they had in view, or intercept with equal force a line they disapproved of. But it is no reproach to them

* Mr. Gladstone's.

to say they cannot be united on it. Placed as they have been in former times, they cannot escape the influence of Lord Palmerston on the one hand, and of their more recent Leader on the other. They are bound by ties of gratitude, of sympathy and of convention, to listen to authorities so diametrically opposite. Hence it is fair to judge the wonderful variety of judgment which escapes their Bench upon the subject. When traced to its cause their oscillation is in some degree a merit. But so long as it prevails, they cannot be a formidable obstacle.

But some contend that their former Head, in his detached and separate existence, is invested with that character Far be it from me to question the importance of the late Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) upon the Eastern Question. In the eyes of all who analyse its sources, the present war has been created by him. To create a European war, without being at the time the Leader of an Opposition or a Government or a Party, has hardly ever fallen to the lot of any individual. The achievement is remarkable, however little to be envied. In spite of the activity and energy which it condenses, it may be shown that he is not so placed as to obstruct with much facility the measures policy requires. More loudly, more conspicuously and much more frequently than others, he has called out for interference to bring the races subject to the Porte under the protection of Great Britain. He cannot deny that the British Embassy at Constantinople is the only instrument in our hands to further such an object. He cannot deny that it is paralysed by our inaction. He cannot deny that it would be revived by our efforts.

The conclusion rapidly presents itself. The more Great Britain spends in upholding the Sublime Porte against hostilities, the greater her ability to dictate its policy, reform its institutions, vindicate its subjects. If a vote of £1,000,000 was proposed, the late Prime Minister ought to insist on its

being doubled. Where is his escape? Can he refer to Russia as an object of unlimited credulity? Can he refer to Russia as the reforming and regenerating instrument against Mahometan dominion? He might : but more than twenty years ago he joined in war in order to resist so odious a pretension. These obstacles may therefore be dismissed as wholly insignificant. They cannot weigh upon the counsels of a Government.

But with regard to the foreign set of obstacles, more gravity belongs to them. It cannot be denied that Great Britain nearly finds herself alone. France and Italy, on whom she might have counted, are deemed to be incapable of action. Germany and Austria, since 1874, have been moving in a Russian orbit, although this very war is tending to detach them from it. Let it be granted that to avoid war with Russia is important, although it may not be imperative. Let it be granted that it ought to come, rather than "sooner," "later," and rather than "later," not at all.

If you desire to avoid a given form of conflict, it is not inappropriate to ask how you formerly got into it. The biographers of Lord Palmerston have made it wonderfully clear to us. We learn from them that during 1853 two modes of thought were brought into collision at every new juncture within the Cabinet itself. Lord Palmerston, time after time, was constantly suggesting to the Prime Minister proceedings to admonish Russia, the Prime Minister insisting on proceedings to conciliate her. On each occasion which arose, Lord Palmerston desired to act upon her fears, Lord Aberdeen to soothe her pride and count on her forbearance. The Prime Minister, of course, succeeded in determining his Cabinet. He was bound to do so. But yet a bloody war was the result of his miscalculating leniency. It is worth while to reflect whether we are not now advancing to the same rock, over the same waters—of ambiguity, of oscillation and inertness, of efforts to cajole

where it is essential to intimidate, and to believe where ten times fortified distrust, yet more than walls or arms, is the security of empires.

It may be asked, however, whether there is any favourable precedent for acting upon treaties when Great Britain is not surrounded by allies. To every one who reflects upon the foreign policy of modern times, a precedent might easily suggest itself. In 1826 Portugal was attacked by bands which started from the Spanish territory. The *casus fœderis* arose which binds Great Britain to come forward. If the ingenious mind of Mr. Canning had not been governed by a strict regard for national engagements, it would have been easy to attenuate it. The diplomatic novelties in which the present Session has abounded would have rapidly effaced it. When the Government of that day resolved upon their expedition to the Tagus, it was undertaken in a spirit adverse to the Holy Alliance, while France and Spain were both co-operating with that system. Many Powers might have joined to check the expedition, while none was certain to support it. It triumphed without bloodshed. Its promptitude was such that the decision of our Government was only known to the inhabitants of Lisbon when they observed the ships, with ten thousand men, advancing to their rescue. It brought immortal credit to its authors. It was followed by repose for nearly thirty years. In all time it was a lesson that prudence and audacity are not incapable of union. It added to the public stock of character authority, prestige of which safety is the offspring,—the public stock which now dissolves under our eyes.

On the whole, the foreign obstacles to action, although much graver than the other class, can hardly be considered insurmountable. One fact, which has not in our various discussions been quite sufficiently alluded to, does much to balance and control them both together. It is, that policy .

and sentiment are so remarkably united in favour of the measures any Government would contemplate. Policy requires the Mediterranean to be guarded against a Power which is shown to be aggressive or unscrupulous ; sentiment demands that the Crimea shall not be turned into an unprofitable charnel-house. Policy requires that the European balance shall be upheld against hypocrisy and violence ; sentiment insists that those who rode at Balaclava shall not be mocked by the surrender of all the objects which they rode for. Policy exacts the maintenance of treaties which such men as Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon established ; sentiment obliges nations to place their honour above money, since money soon returns, and honour lost is irrecoverable. Policy enjoins that the Egyptian and other routes to India should be open ; sentiment reminds that the co-religionists of Christendom ought not to be left to Ottoman misrule or Muscovite rapacity, and they are left to both so long as this attempt is wholly unresisted. A Minister who acts with policy and sentiment behind him cannot easily be daunted. He may defy the spirit which broke out a year ago and still perplexes our counsels : which first began to traffic on Bulgarian excesses ; which next disparaged efforts to relieve them ; which then confederated with the guilt which had produced them ; which afterwards endeavoured to sow dissension between the late Plenipotentiary (the Marquess of Salisbury) and those who had appointed him ; which raged and fumed against the Treaties ; which, last of all, succeeded in hounding Russia into war ; and now, with furious philanthropy, exults in the depopulated villages, the blood-stained territory and wasted harvests of the country it befriended. At least, it is not too soon to refer to the precedent of 1826, if any good can be derived from it.

An eminent authority on that part of the subject is reported to have said that the present war is not directed against

India, where tried organisation, large resources, and the charm of seldom interrupted victory, might well enable you to grapple with it. Its aim is less remote, its character more menacing. We have waited for the passage of the Danube. We have waited till the Balkans have in some degree been traversed. Shall we wait till Adrianople has been occupied ; or till the last defence—the line traced out by Sir John Burgoyne—has been approached ? That line is distant from Constantinople only twenty miles. It connects two seas. According to Sir John Burgoyne, sixty thousand Asiatic and forty thousand European troops are wanted to defend it. Of one thing we may be sure—that when it is approached, gold and iron will be joined in the exertion to surmount it. If that fails, shall we protect Stamboul after the European suburb has been occupied ? Or, last of all, shall we hang up our unintelligible interests and shattered Treaties at Gallipoli ?

My Lords, there are two paths : the path of preparatory measures without war, and that of war without preparatory measures ; the path of honour leading to repose, and that of national reproach conducting to entanglement, to struggle, possibly disaster. By sending back the fleet the Government may seem to have adopted the becoming one. I recognise the circumstance. It is too late for them to quit it. I only venture to remark that on that path, if they are enchain'd, they ought to be released ; if they stand still, they ought to move ; and, if they move, their movements ought to be impelled by the united voice of this House and of the public, in spite of every tool which the aggressor may employ.

The noble Lord concluded by moving for any answer to the Circular despatch of the Ottoman Government to its Representatives abroad, dated January 25th.

At the close of the debate :—

Lord Campbell, in reply, said that, although he could not

ask their Lordships to remain at such an hour, what had fallen from the noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby), and the noble Earl (Earl Granville) who had preceded him in the same department, imposed on him the necessity of a few words in answer. As to the noble Earl the Secretary of State, he had defended the Proclamation of Neutrality in a manner which implied complete forgetfulness of a maxim the late Sir Robert Peel had prudently laid down, and which M. Guizot had recorded—namely, that a Government is often at liberty to act when it is not at liberty to speak of its intentions. Neutrality itself implied nothing but that the time for coming forward had not yet arrived, or that preparation was inadequate. Proclamation of Neutrality was an impediment or an encumbrance when the support of an ally became imperatively requisite. On what grounds the Proclamation of Neutrality was more essential in this juncture than it had been in 1828 or 1853, or was more incumbent on Great Britain than on other Powers, the noble Earl had not attempted to explain. As to the rather insignificant attack of the noble Earl the late Secretary of State with regard to the postponement of the Motion, on the first occasion he (Lord Campbell) was prevented by indisposition from attending and going on with it ; on two others the hour was not one at which their Lordships could be present. As to the further complaint of the noble Earl, that he (Lord Campbell) had brought forward many Motions on the Eastern Question for three years, he was not anxious to defend himself. He had never yet originated a discussion on the topic which had tended to lower that House at home or on the continent of Europe. Since the Foreign Office had not deemed it right to answer the Ottoman despatch of January 25th, there could be no difficulty in the withdrawal of the Motion.

January 28th, 1878.

THE EASTERN QUESTION—RUSSIA AND THE PORTE.

RESOLUTION.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to further papers respecting the affairs of Turkey, and move to resolve that "in the opinion of this House, neutrality, whether conditional or absolute, in no way prohibits Her Majesty's Government from adopting such measures as are necessary to conform to the Treaties of 1856, and to guard Constantinople against a hostile occupation," said : My Lords, it may be thought, in reference to the notice I have given, that a motion ought to have been added to it. I will certainly conclude with one, so as at least to give the debate a greater regularity. There was obvious difficulty in putting it beforehand on the paper, in the midst of the varying events by which each day has been characterised. A motion suitable on Friday might not be appropriate on Monday, with such rapid scenes, and none could be put down during the interval. One could hardly tell for what a motion should provide, or engage other men—without much reservation on their part—to support it. But no one feels more strongly than myself that your Lordships ought not at a time like this to meet only with a view to listening and speaking. If an important vote is taken in the other House of Parliament, the opinion of your Lordships might do something to enhance,—if none arises, something to replace, its influence in Europe.

My Lords, in so harassing a juncture the House would not

be much inclined to dwell upon Blue-books, although they cannot be entirely lost sight of. The first and most voluminous may be passed over very quickly, as it is chiefly a mirror of reciprocal atrocities during the war, and of the weakness to which the British Embassy at Constantinople is unavoidably reduced, when it continues to advise after Great Britain has ceased to act as a defending Power towards the object of its counsels. There is only one despatch in the second I am anxious to refer to, as it throws a vivid light on much which is engaging us. It is the admission of Prince Gortchakoff, in page 13, that Russia aims at such a peace as can only be obtained by the further progress of her arms and the prolonged inaction of this country. It is the clearest intimation of what nearly every one feels—that the aggression will be only checked by the obstruction which it meets with. Hope could not be more wild, credulity more fatuous, than the belief that Russia will arrest herself before Great Britain has assumed a different attitude towards her. To-night, however, she may do so. On the prospect of that event—in common, I believe, with a large majority on both sides of the House—I venture to congratulate the Government.

My Lords, the most important topic to consider at this moment would appear to be the terms of peace, which have been shadowed as an argument against preparatory measures on our part. It is true that we have no official knowledge on the subject. It is true that geographical and military details may be wanting. I refer merely to the accounts which are the most recent, the most generally credited; and that because the manner in which these propositions—exact or not—are viewed, may deeply influence opinion in the country. As far as we yet know, the vassal principalities which have iniquitously waged a war against their suzerain will be rewarded for their treason at the dictation of the Empire which used to

plume itself on being the scourge of revolution, and, as it were, the constable of Europe. They would thus be brought to absolute dependence upon Russia, as the only prop of their factitious nationality. Their newly-gotten right to go to war with one another—a necessary incident of freedom—they would owe to a State which in the world has always been the patron of tranquillity and order. According to the sketch, the influence which Russia is to claim on both sides of the Balkans really places Constantinople at her mercy. There is no occasion to demand—although apparently she does—the power to bombard it by control over the Dardanelles.

In one point of view, too much forgotten at this moment, the encroachments traced in Asia are even more momentous. If European Turkey is held by the Sublime Porte on the most precarious of tenures, in spite of treaties and in spite of prepossessions, the interest of Europe must suggest the birth of some new Power to guard the Bosphorus against disastrous usurpation. That such a Power should exist, if only in conception, it is essential that his Asiatic provinces should not be wrested from the Sultan. But the privation of Batoum and Kars, of which we hear, effaces their security.

Some minds—I offer no opinion on their project—are fond of speculating on the hope of a Byzantine Empire. The Patriarch of the Greek Church might very possibly agree with them. The late Duke of Wellington, in 1828 or 1829, gave a kind of sanction to this view in a contingency which struck him, although perhaps he did not mean it to be handed to posterity. The cession of Batoum and Kars, with other sacrifices mentioned in Armenia, would be fatal to the hope of what at all events is rather difficult to execute. If men wish the Sublime Porte to be no longer European, they cannot authorise encroachments which render it impossible

in Asia. Last of all, the indemnity to be exacted annihilates the hope of the ill-used, the exasperated bondholder, who is thought in no small degree to rule our Eastern policy at present.

My Lords, at this stage one cannot help reflecting on the habitual language of the Government last Session, when urged to act as far as possible, without hostilities, upon the Treaties which engage us. They said that when the war closed would be the moment to step in with overmastering authority and limit the demand of the belligerents. They seemed to think that, without sacrifice or risk or toil, they might achieve the ends for which those means are generally lavished. In vain it was insisted that diplomacy would hardly give an instance of advantages so cheaply bought, so pleasingly appropriated ; in vain it was insisted that for political success political exertion was desirable.

They admitted that historical examples might go the other way ; but they contended on general and abstract grounds—as it occurred to me far too general and abstract—that the Power which has not wasted its strength in a campaign may dictate to the two belligerents, whose treasure is reduced, whose armies are exhausted. It did not appear to them that a victorious belligerent is not entirely exhausted—that he is likely to be far beyond the operation of their counsel—that he may treat with scorn the views which they present to him. It is not, however, for the purpose of attack that I recall their calculations, but rather with a view to show that their decision in the other House was no unnecessary proof of their consistency and rectitude.

My Lords, a Russian occupation of Constantinople has been so frequently discussed that it is worth while to say a word or two upon it. I pass over the indignity to which it would expose our country and our Sovereign, who used to be, who ought to be, the guardians of that capital. It might lead

to carnage the most fearful, from the diversity of races which is found there, and the hatred to which the foreign elements would be exposed. In all time it would degrade the British Embassy, while to the Russian it might secure—however brief—still more unlimited control than that which existed before, and brought such terrible calamities upon the Empire it demoralised.

But it is far more serious to recollect that we have not the slightest guarantee for such an occupation being of temporary character. Should it be permanent, as neither the Crown nor Parliament have any ground for acquiescing in it, it must involve Great Britain in hostilities with Russia, which all reflecting men are anxious to prevent, until our duty to the world compels us to resort to them. The measures necessary to avert an occupation are very different from the measures necessary to dislodge it. The measures to avert it would not involve departure from neutrality—the only point demanded even by the kind of partial agitation which is thought to check the action of the Government.

My Lords, that proposition bears so much upon the moment that I am bound, perhaps, to show it has not lightly been advanced. It was, indeed, insisted on by a deputation which approached the noble Earl the Secretary of State during the autumn, and it has never been replied to. It is a question of public law, on which the best authority lays down that when a State is bound by treaty to give support to an ally who is in danger, it is consistent with neutrality to grant it.

Earl Granville: Can you mention the authority?

Lord Campbell: *Vattel*, book 3, chapter 7, section 105. The House has heard of Vattel so repeatedly of late, that, with a view to save them from fatigue, I was inclined to hurry over that part of the subject. Should it, however, be the pleasure of the noble Earl the former Secretary of State, and of your Lordships, I should not at all refuse to dwell upon it.

But it is not only the authority of public law—the dictum of Vattel, which may direct us on the subject. In 1853, in a long series of communications to the Government of which he was a member, and which are published now, Lord Palmerston exhibited this principle. War going on between Russia and the Porte, Great Britain still adhering to the position of a neutral, Lord Palmerston was urgent for two measures—the suspension of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and the movement of the British Fleet up to the Bosphorus.

But the argument is not obliged to rest entirely upon Vattel and Lord Palmerston. The same principle has been applied on several occasions in our history. In the time of Henry VII., according to his best historian, Lord Bacon, the King resolved to give support to the Duke of Brittany, then an independent Prince, upon the ground of an alliance, while his neutrality towards France, the invading Power, continued as it had done.

But to step at once to modern times, when in 1827 the Government of that day sent out, in virtue of engagements, their well-known expedition for the defence of Portugal, whom Spain was undermining, no *casus belli* was afforded to that country, and no hostilities were threatened. The essence of the new Treaty to uphold Belgium, in 1870, superadded to the former guarantee of 1839, if I have understood it, was that Great Britain should restrict herself to the task without becoming involved in further operations of the war, without entirely departing from her function as a neutral. These instances, however, are not at all required in order to maintain that Great Britain may do quite as much as Lord Palmerston advised in 1853, without giving any Power a title to hostilities.

Of course it is well known to all of us that the Russian Party, which within a year has been established in this country, when they insist upon neutrality, really wish to bar the measures of precaution by which the Czar may be arrested

in his progress to the destruction of the Treaties which are binding on us.

My Lords, the answer is, that the Russian Party cannot be permitted to dictate to a State of which they are alike indifferent to the faith, the honour and the interest. The Russian Party are, unfortunately, open to a long variety of charges, but very few of them are quite sufficient to dispose of their authority at present. They have not attempted to fulfil the first condition of being listened to. It is obvious that the first condition upon which they could demand adherents was ability to show that the foreign policy of Russia, as it was known in the time of Catherine II., as it betrayed itself in 1853, as it burst out in 1870, had lost the qualities by which it formerly excited vigilance among us. But they have not attempted to establish any variation in its character. They have connived at all the startling proofs of its identity which followed one another from the Crimean war to 1871, and from that time down to this moment. They begin, therefore, by proclaiming their incredible fatuity.

In the next place, they have never listened to, or recognised, or tried to controvert the argument, although in many forms it has been urged upon them, that the welfare of the races subject to the Porte—the races they have patronised—depends on British influence they have done their utmost to destroy, and not on British nullity they have now succeeded in creating, on the Bosphorus. Beyond that, they have done their worst to check Ottoman reform, by blackening the constitution which was founded to produce it, and thus they have leagued themselves with all the darkest elements by which the Sultan is habitually prompted to overthrow the freedom he has sanctioned.

Last of all, the Russian Party have endeavoured to deceive the public by asserting upon every occasion that those who do not follow them are advocates of war, when it has been

repeatedly demonstrated they advocate the measures by which eventual war alone can be averted. My Lords, on this point, although it may arise from ignorance and passion, to which they are particularly liable, the Russian Party have been led to absolute mendacity. One thing, however, should be admitted in their favour—they are not unworthy of the feet at which they sit, or of the school in which they have been disciplined.

My Lords, I have observed, although not in this country, that when political events have gone beyond a certain line of gravity and tension, speeches of any length are felt as inappropriate, although before that line is reached they may be welcome. It was the case in France in 1870. During the eventful weeks of August the Assemblies, still at Paris, listened with increased susceptibility. After the catastrophe at Sedan no voice was heard, although apparently there never was a greater scope for exposition and remonstrance. There is a strong impression—out-of-doors at least—that on the Eastern Question our Sedan is consummated. Although I do not share it, one is bound to consult the taste of those who may be under its ascendancy. As regards the Motion which I promised, it would, I think, enable this House to double the advantage of the precautionary measure* which the other House of Parliament is being invited to consider. Should that appear to be its tendency, no technical objection, at such a time, can well prevent your Lordships from adopting it.

The noble Lord concluded by moving his Resolution.

At the close of the debate :—

Lord Campbell, in reply, said that, although the House was no longer full, the course of the debate imposed on him

* The Vote of Credit.

the necessity of making a few remarks in answer. As regards the Treaty of 1870 for the maintenance of Belgium, he at once accepted the noble Earl who had framed it (Earl Granville) as its legitimate interpreter, although he (Lord Campbell) had been disposed to interpret it in a different manner. But the loss of that example—which, in fact, was wholly unrequired—would not at all affect the proposition as to the title of a neutral to give support to an ally. He was bound to return to his noble and gallant friend below (Lord Dorchester) his cordial thanks for the speech he had delivered. Whether or not his noble and gallant friend was an exponent of the Army, he had faithfully reflected a large mass of Liberal opinion on the present war, which in that House had seldom found an adequate expression.

As to the noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby), the public would learn with little satisfaction the grounds on which he had withdrawn his resignation. They would be led to think that the greatest variance existed between the First Lord of the Treasury and the Secretary of State, and that the latter was the only obstacle to the advance of the fleet where it had been previously directed. That the noble Earl the Secretary of State should charge him (Lord Campbell) with promoting war between Russia and Great Britain was indeed astonishing. Unless his memory had been impaired, on every occasion he (Lord Campbell) had disclaimed such a tendency. He had contended always that war could only be averted by preparatory measures, as the decisive reason for adopting them. The same view had been presented—he hoped with some degree of accuracy—to the noble Earl in a prepared paper by a deputation to the Foreign Office in November.

The noble Earl had not attempted an argument against the Resolution, beyond the fact that it was not sufficiently explicit, and did not recommend in terms the line of action it declared

to be consistent with neutrality. Would any man on earth, at least would any man in Europe, doubt as to the encouragement it gave to the line of action which it sanctioned? Except in Parliament, an objection of this kind would never be resorted to. If the Government declined to accede to the Motion it was impossible to carry it. He should not withdraw, but he left it to others to consider in what manner it might be dealt with, as regarded effect beyond the limits of the House.

February 25th, 1878.

RUSSIA AND THE PORTE—THE TREATIES OF 1856 AND 1871.

RESOLUTION.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising to move,—

“ That, in the opinion of this House, the correspondence on the affairs of Turkey justifies Her Majesty’s Government in taking every precaution to discourage the serious encroachments by which the Treaties of 1856 and 1871 are threatened,”

said : It saves time, my Lords, on an occasion of this sort, to go on at once to a preliminary obstacle, even if it is but a matter of detail, which may occur to those who otherwise are ready to support you. The Bill* which came before the House on Thursday night, it may appear to some, anticipates the purpose of the Motion. Had it led to any conflict of opinion, or prolonged debate, or fixed upon itself the marked attention of the world, it possibly might do so. But as the noble Earl the Prime Minister apparently considered it so much a matter of routine as not to speak beyond five minutes,—as the noble and learned Lord upon the woolsack, no doubt in the same sense, put the Question with such despatch that only active men were able to present themselves, and that after the second reading had been carried,—it does not seem to me that this effect can be imputed to it. What took place was more like the Appropriation Bill, whose smooth and easy passage

* The Consolidated Fund (£6,000,000) Bill.

through the House—although, of course, it might be thrown out—is not thought to have an international significance. At the best, as things stand, this House has only acquiesced ; the other, after many pangs and labours, has initiated.

Let me not appear, however, in any way to undervalue the discussion of Thursday last, and least of all the talent it elicited from those who joined in it. But so long as there are some results to be ensured in a considerable difficulty—not to overrate it—while it is uncertain how far that Bill ensures them, the House will not decline to entertain a supplemental proposition. The results which I allude to are the avoidance of a war and the success of any conference which happens. At the same time I readily admit that the Motion loses one of the advantages it might have had a week ago, had it been then permitted to come forward.

On that day we were on the eve of the German Parliament assembling. It had occurred to me, as it might indeed to all of us, that any Resolution your Lordships carried on that day would have a timely influence in Europe. Wherever a conference arises, wherever a green table is set up, even should it be in that favoured spot where other tables used to be familiar, to save Constantinople at Berlin will be, as much as heretofore, the task of our statesmen. It is still to the last capital that Powers may look to measure the restraint imposed, the latitude accorded. We may be led to think that, while the task has not been yet achieved, it is not yet to be despaired of. Unless, it seemed to me, a motion of this kind, if carried by the House, would even now facilitate it, I could not face the many risks involved in urging it upon them. Before endeavouring to show that it tends to the avoidance of a war, one is compelled to answer those who see no other possible solution of the dangers which surround us. The right of Great Britain to go to war, they may allege, began when Russia crossed the Pruth without

her sanction, and now that Constantinople is menaced day by day could hardly be contested.

Without pretending to deny the force of many things they urge, there is a fact which ought to be considered at this moment, because it seems to throw a light upon the path before us. Since the Revolution of 1688, Great Britain has been involved in nine wars, without including those of Africa and Asia. The first, as is easy to recall, concluded with the Peace of Ryswick; the last with the arrangements of 1856. All but three have been, if not brilliant in their course, at least in their termination satisfactory. In those three the public was divided. They severally finished in 1748, in the loss of the American dependencies, and in the Peace of Amiens. The lesson cannot be evaded that much has to be feared in a struggle which is not upheld by a distinct preponderance of judgment and of sentiment. Day by day—it may be said—the Russian party is collapsing. But it exists. At this moment, it has recently been stated, two London journals only are allowed to cross the Russian frontier. When they are all excluded, unanimity will have declared itself by the most decisive register which it can possibly obtain. That a Resolution of this character tends to avoid a war is seen by merely glancing at the elements by which the public mind is so much agitated at this moment. The occupation of Constantinople would do more than anything, as it has long been pointed out, as everybody feels, to render war inevitable.

Whatever indicates the fortitude of Parliament, whatever augurs a conclusion to resist that occupation, diminishes the prospect of its happening. Material defence is sensibly reduced. The lines between the Sea of Marmora and the Black Sea, so frequently connected with the name of Sir John Burgoyne, have been abandoned. It is not less important, it is more so, to embody in decisive constitutional and

salutary forms the resolution of Great Britain to impose a check upon the Power her weakness alone has lured through all its stages of aggression.

The Foreign Office still invites us to depend on Russian assurances. Even if we do not look on such assurances with something more emphatic than distrust—the nation does so—it would still be worth while to prop and to encourage their fidelity. Besides, a Resolution of the kind must on obvious grounds impede those separate negotiations between Russia and the Porte from which European war would demonstrably emanate.

We are now led to the other point, as to how the Motion bears on the success of any Conference which happens. It is desirable to glance at the advantage such a Resolution offers to any Plenipotentiary who represents us at the Conference, and realise, although we cannot do it accurately, the kind of task he has before him. It is easy to perceive, at least, the task is far from being a light one. He is not backed up by a successful war, as happened to Lord Castlereagh at Vienna, to Lord Clarendon at Paris. There are three unfortunate, or at least uncomfortable, instances behind him, in which a Conference has not at all secured the objects of his country—however ably directed—that on Denmark, that on the Black Sea, and that which lately happened at Constantinople. He will have to counteract the aims, while he acknowledges the victories, of Russia. He goes there with the recent action of the Holy Alliance in his face, whether he endeavours to resist or to divide it. New problems of many kinds as regards administration in the East will exercise and harass him. Deep dissimulation, practised incredulity, incessant vigilance, the power of avoiding errors, and the power of repairing them, with every other quality which his profession has matured, will scarcely make him independent of the best support which Parliament can offer him. He ought not now

to appear as representing a weak, distracted, hesitating Power in any of its constituent branches. The society he enters will be too ready to insist that Great Britain has now permitted Russian influence to sway her ; that, come what may, his language will not be sustained by the decision of the State he acts for ; that all regard for public law, that all deference to treaties, that all antagonism to encroachment has lately perished in his country. Will such a Resolution, coinciding with the Vote of Credit, be superfluous ?

Along the benches of the House there are not wanting individuals who, from their past career, and from the aptitudes obtained in it, might creditably undertake an office of this nature. Let them dismiss, if they think proper, all other trains of reasoning, and merely ask themselves whether, if they were going to-morrow to represent Great Britain at the Conference, they would wish a Resolution of the kind to be adopted or rejected. Unless the answer of their own minds is such as I anticipate, they ought not indeed to act with me to-night.

But here it is important to remind them of one circumstance. The Resolution in no way involves the principle that the Treaties of 1856 are never to undergo modification. According to the separate and well-known Protocol of 1871, it is laid down that treaties may be modified or abrogated by all the Powers which signed them, but not in any other form and not by any other agency. The Resolution I submit, on that point, would only be an affirmation of the Protocol. The House, I am convinced, perceives no danger that the Treaties of 1856 will be too sedulously vindicated. They will not be an iron wall to the diplomatist. The risk is all the other way. The interest of Europe evidently is to guard them from attack, until a salutary method of replacing them presents itself.

As regards the language of the Notice, if something better

can be framed, it ought, of course, to be amended. It has long occurred to me that, while one man may be able to create a tragedy, an epic, or a novel in three volumes, sometimes even to draw up a code of laws, it requires several to frame a Resolution which, however brief, becomes the voice of an assembly. At least half a dozen had in some degree contributed to this one, before the appeal of the Government last week imposed a general revision of it. But there is not the slightest reason why other noble lords should not attempt to render it more equal to its purposes. I am ready to accede to anything which does so. The essential point is that the disposition of the House should be conveyed at the right time and in the least objectionable language.

My Lords, if I refrain from further argument which bears directly on the Resolution, it is not because it is exhausted, but only from excessive fear of wasting the indulgence of the House, when there are other topics indispensable to glance at. Should any one be still dissatisfied, I engage him only to reflect upon the present situation under the heads which present themselves to any mind habitually employed upon it. He will arrive himself at stronger grounds than I have offered for the Motion. Let him reflect upon it as to the Treaties, and observe in how anomalous a manner they are suddenly revived by the proposal of a Conference, while the war itself had long consigned them to obscurity. Let him reflect upon it as to British interests, and ask himself how far those traced in the despatch of May 6th can be secured when Russia has an optional control over the Dardanelles, although a British fleet is anchored in the Sea of Marmora. Let him reflect upon it as to the welfare of the races subject to the Porte so recently, so vividly debated, and call to mind that all its proper barriers have vanished. The Constitution disappears, the friendly Embassies are silenced, and these races again depend on that ambiguous Protectorate, on that disorganising

sympathy from which the arms, the wisdom and diplomacy of Europe had released them.

If any one is still dissatisfied, let him reflect upon the situation, if he chooses, even as regards some new solution on the Bosphorus. He will find that whatever meditation can invent, ability mature, statesmen organise, or armies take under their shelter, is opposed by the tremendous fact that the catastrophe against which it guards is all but ripe, is all but irresistible already. By reflecting in these great categories on the events around us, he will observe much better than any speaker could explain the grave and complex task to be imposed upon the British Representative, and the necessity of every aid which Parliament can furnish him. Were it not for long experience of the noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby) upon occasions of this kind, it would not be necessary to defend the Motion any longer. The noble Earl has seemed to look with an unvarying dislike on every Parliamentary proceeding, however favourable to the objects he is bound to cherish. He will not consent that the opinion of this House should be arrayed against the very elements with which he is contending. It was so during the question of the vassal principalities in 1875. It was so during the Servian insurrection. It was so when Russia only meditated conquest, and the decisive language of the House might have restrained her. It was so a month ago, when the noble Earl, a strict enthusiastic patron of neutrality, was but required to affirm that neutrality would authorise the very measures which at last the Government are prosecuting. Nothing which falls from me can influence the noble Earl, unless, perhaps, I venture to address him in terms once uttered elsewhere by the Prime Minister—"When will you be warned?"

The counsels which brought back the fleet—which might have bred a mutiny within it—may be arrayed against me. It may be deemed essential by the Government to propitiate

the noble Earl by a resistance to the Motion they would cheerfully accede to. However, the noble Earl, like other men, may gain by his experience. There is a line in *Coriolanus* it would well become him to remember:

“Sir, those cold ways,
Which seem like prudent helps, are very poisons
When the disease is violent.”

I would not finish the quotation so far as to add—

“Lay hands upon him and bear him to the rock”;

but unless the tenor of the noble Earl is gravely altered, both in Parliament and out of it, he may draw upon himself from every corner of the kingdom another line of the same tragedy--

“He's a disease which must be cut away.”

But in the matter of Parliamentary proceedings, it is but just to recollect that the noble Earl from time to time may be directed, not by his own mind, but by the Bench which, technically speaking, is arrayed to criticise his policy. It is a natural if not legitimate infirmity. But to please that Bench for him is utterly impossible, since no mode of thinking on the Eastern Question which exists has not occasionally fallen from it. On this occasion, therefore, the noble Earl has nothing but the reason of the case, the interests of peace, the objects of the Conference to guide him.

It would be inadvertent to forget that the noble Earl the former Secretary of State (Earl Granville) has gone out of his way to proclaim hostility to such a Motion as the present. He is reported to have said that it was difficult to understand it as a vote of censure or of confidence towards Her Majesty's Administration. It is on this very ground it ought to be adopted. A vote of censure would be out of place when the Government are making greater efforts than they did during

the autumn. A vote of confidence would scarcely be appropriate, when all mankind repeat that, under whatever pressure or whatever disadvantages, they have brought the country to embarrassments not often known in its history. Where is it laid down that every Resolution which tends to fortify a diplomatic step about to be attempted, or guard against a foreign danger known to exist, must be a vote of censure on the one hand or of confidence on the other? Is it in Blackstone, or Delolme, if ever the latter personage existed? Is it in May or Hatsell, who both came nearer to the vitals of the subject? Or is it so expounded by that original, attractive, lucid commentator on our system, the much deplored, the highly gifted Mr. Bagehot?

When this House resolved, during the Government of Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, that no peace which united the crowns of Spain and France would be acceptable, was that a vote of censure or confidence? It seems to me to have been rather one of indication of direction—possibly encouragement. In this country, it is usual to remark, one precedent suffices. But I will not pursue the topic, as the noble Earl has intimated his reluctance to take part in the debate. If he divides the House against me, I only ask him to persist in tactics so consummate.

But some noble lords on this side of the House, whose concurrence with the Motion I well know to be essential to it, may reason that, as the late Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) opposed the Vote of Credit, he would be unfriendly to a Resolution in any manner qualified to strengthen its effect. Although he has avowedly withdrawn from party life or party leadership, they cannot wholly disengage their minds from an allegiance to him. It illustrates his eminence; it is a proof of his ascendancy. His recent conduct, for almost two years, upon the Eastern Question, is much too large a theme for me, although it would be perfectly in order to allude to it. It

is only by some outlying thread which happens to present itself one can approach it for a minute.

There is one point on which he has repeatedly expatiated out of doors, if not in Parliament, and on which it seems to me my noble friends can never thoroughly concur with him. It is that accusation or invective against Russian policy is futile, because it has now gone on for a considerable period. In his own expressive phrase—the phrase could only come, perhaps, from such a master—it ought to be described as “superannuated rolling stock.” But yet no change of facts has been pretended to give it such a character, or take away the application and the force which previously belonged to it. At least, my noble friends might ask themselves to what extent would this new principle conduct us?

Adam Smith has flourished now a hundred years as an authority: he has not, therefore, any claim upon adherents. Civil and religious liberty have been asserted for two centuries: we must dismiss them to the lumber-room where ancient samples are collected. The Bill of Rights has lasted many years: it ought no longer to be held in veneration. In what quarter has this appalling paradox originated? It is propounded by a courtier of the masses, who looks to popular excitement as the mechanism by which a new and Russian school of foreign policy may be upheld. From him we learn—it may be in an unguarded moment which restless heat had brought about—that truth is not to be revered when it is no longer esoteric; that all its force is gone as soon as generations have endorsed and numbers have re-echoed it.

But there is another test how far my noble friends ought to accept the late Prime Minister with perfect faith upon these subjects. Have the Continental Liberals supported him, or, on the contrary, repelled him? My noble friends will recollect that the question does not bear upon the institutions of Great Britain, that it is altogether European and cosmopolitan. It

would be laughable to urge—and nobody has done so—that, as regards the East, Liberal opinion dictated separate opinions at London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. If the new doctrine is sound for us, in all those capitals it is so. What has happened? Except among ourselves, too near the wand of the enchanter—as my noble friends regard him—the representatives of Liberal opinion have utterly disclaimed the school which he is organising. Kossuth indignantly exposes it, from the volcano men had thought to be burnt out. Karl Blind, well known in the German Empire as something of a democratic leader, no less eagerly assails it. M. Gambetta, who has an organ—unlike Her Majesty's Government, as we were told the other night—in that organ is habitually denouncing it. It would be verging upon irony to say that such authorities have local means of studying the Eastern difficulty as great as those of the right hon. gentleman, when so much more might safely be asserted. He appears, therefore, to be positively isolated from minds whose sanction was essential to the doctrine he proposed.

But if no arguments at home, and no facts abroad, would be sufficient for the purpose, at least the late Prime Minister himself might disengage my noble friends from all adherence to his Eastern system. He has done it. Unless so many eyes, so many thoughts, were fixed on distant scenes, it would not be forgotten for a moment. Within a few weeks the late Prime Minister has inaugurated a club to the memory of Lord Palmerston. A club in our days, as regards the honour it confers, is like a temple with the ancients. You cannot get beyond it. Statues there are many; but at present only two distinguished names—in politics at least—are kept alive by clubs in the Metropolis. What did such a step amount to? It amounted to a solemn fiat, accompanied by all the gravity of which the late Prime Minister is capable, that the mind of Lord Palmerston should now direct our counsels, at

least in the sphere in which it was pre-eminent. The echo comes from every quarter. What do men say in streets, in railways and in hunting-fields? They say, "If we had only had a week or fortnight of Lord Palmerston!"

An elector from a distant province wrote not long ago to obtain an order for the Abbey, on the ground that he would take away the backbone of Lord Palmerston, and fling it into the Executive. But if Lord Palmerston is now to animate our policy, the late Prime Minister dethrones himself while he disperses his adherents. The line of Lord Palmerston can never be a Russian one. It need not be the line of war; it must be that of vigour, preparation and precaution; it must meet overbearing force with temperate resistance; it must be calculated to support allies and to intimidate opponents.

In that sense the Motion is conceived. In that sense my noble friends are now at liberty to sanction it. But still I know the doubt which will suggest itself. It will be asked, how comes it that the late Prime Minister has gained or lately had so much control over opinion, over policy relating to this subject, if, in fact, his title to possess it was so slender, and if he now disclaims the title he had formerly usurped? There are many explanations of the circumstance too long, too painful to be given. But I shall touch on one to-night, with the permission of your Lordships.

The leading argument against him is in some respects too cogent to be handled. Let me explain myself. In 1853 and 1854 the politicians who desired to array Great Britain against Russia, when her design had been unmasked, had only to point out that, for the interest of Europe, Constantinople and the avenues which lead to it required to be defended. A course of reasoning, on certain geographical, strategical, political foundations had to be submitted, and there the topic ended.

Although they still exist, the case is now a different one.

To show that when so much was gained, it ought not to be parted with ; that blood so freely spilt should not be unproductive ; that there ought not to be an ignominious flight across the Alma ; that the swords of Balaclava should hardly be connected with a murderous parade, the toils of Inkerman reduced into a sanguinary field day, the debarkation of three armies turned into manœuvres for the autumn ; that a peace of forty years should not be ineffectually broken ; that Great Britain should not array herself against the leading tyranny of Europe to be afterwards its vassal, or establish a benign defence of all the races subject to the Porte in order to obtain them, or form a citadel of public law to mock and to desert it,—this topic, it might well occur to any one, the united orators of ancient and modern times would not be able fully to delineate.

What follows ? It is scarcely pointed out ; it is forgotten. So, my Lords, extremes are found to meet each other. While one weapon is so slight and fragile that men will hardly take it up, another may be so keen, so ponderous, so irresistible, if adequately handled, that men would rather leave it on the ground than prove their inability for meeting its demands upon them. It is the old story. Nobody could draw the bow of Ulysses. A bow of that sort is in question. The Prime Minister might try it. But, when any one suffices for the labour, two arrows may perhaps be seen darting from its tension—one to wing its way into the deepest sensibilities, the proudest recollections diffused by the Crimean war, alike in hovels and in palaces ; the other which, transfixing, would attach for ever to the ground the impious school who have aspired to plough over its laurels.

Let me defend the epithet which I have chosen, and show that impious is the very term to be applied to them. The school in question have promulgated a line of foreign policy revolting to the established feelings of mankind, under the

flag of zeal for Christianity, in certain parts of Europe where they think it is degraded. They have never shown that the concessions to encroaching violence they favour would tend in any way to its advantage, or dared to meet the arguments by which they have been frequently encountered. They still, however, try to move the world as friends of Christianity and as accomplices of tyranny.

What can be more destructive as regards the object they avowedly pursue? Has Christianity no obstacle in this, as it had in former ages? Can any one be blind to the many forms of speculation which assail it, or to the boldness with which it is now thought safe and decent to exhibit them? What a triumph is not given to this freethinking party, as they term themselves, if, under the name of Christianity, nations are instructed to abandon treaties, to renounce allies, to become at the same moment greedy of repose and prodigal of honour, incapable of sacrifice, insensible to duty beyond their limited circumference!

It is worthy of remark, however, that these reasoners, who are thus subverting Christianity by the handle which they give to its opponents, are the incessant scourges of the Mahometan religion. No stone is left unturned to weaken or to vilify it. Their system bursts upon reflection. It is, while overbearing power rises at their dictate, by one sinister blow to efface the Cross and the Crescent both together, and plunge the world into the Russian night to which the last Lord Strangford—a better friend of the Bulgarians than the invading host—so mournfully alluded. Before that night is fixed, a further opportunity is yet presented to your Lordships to array yourselves against it.

My Lords, it is with real concern I find how long I am detaining you. The House, however, will remember how much devolves upon any one who has a Motion at such a time of such a character, and who may be severely blamed unless

it is adopted by your Lordships. To warn my noble friends—for the last time—against the school I have alluded to, let me remind them of its newest proposition. It is surpassing. That school is now contending that Great Britain ought not to seek the aid of Austria in the Conference, when Austria is beginning to awaken from the slumber in which the force of other countries had involved her. What else is there to rely upon? Those who think, as I have done, upon the Eastern Question for some years, have not the slightest reason to be partial to that Empire. They recall the part, at once a forward and a dangerous one, which Austria took in the commercial treaties with the vassal principalities. They recall the aid she gave, by means of General Rodich, to all the troubles which are sometimes called the fire of Herzegovina. They are not blind to her manœuvres at that period, although they may ascribe them to the absence from Vienna of the distinguished man who has become, in some degree, the second founder of the State which he adopted.

According to the school in question, Austria is unsafe because her aberration is exhausted. So long as she is closely fixed in the Holy Alliance, they adore her; as soon as she struggles to revert to her engagements to the Western Powers, she is an object of distrust and alienation. Deformity they hug; but when the wrinkles disappear, when beauty reasserts herself, they fly away, like owls retiring before sunshine. Beyond that, in their unchecked simplicity, they aim at popular support, while trampling upon everything Hungarian—in other words, on everything genuinely Liberal—within the circle of that Empire.

It is true, indeed, they have provided an alternative. Emboldened by the absolute impunity they meet with, and sheltered by a name so well known as that of the late Prime Minister, the new school inquire on what ground Russia and Great Britain cannot act together smoothly in the Conference?

It really would not seem to be beyond the ordinary limits of the human mind to answer such a question. Russia seeks to overthrow at once the Treaties of 1856, Great Britain to maintain them until they can be properly reorganised. Russia has in view her own aggrandisement upon the Bosphorus; Great Britain looks to stronger combinations than the present one for checking it. The influence of Russia is wrapt up in the corrupt administration of European Turkey; Great Britain wishes to reform it. Russia looked with absolute dismay on constitutional development among the subjects of the Porte; with one or two fanatical exceptions, Great Britain encouraged and applauded it as the best security for all improvement in that Empire. Russia, since 1815, has been disturbing and aggressive; Great Britain is bound by interest, by policy and by tradition, to withstand her. They annihilated Poland; we looked with horror on that crime. They, so recently as 1870, under the present reign and with the present Chancellor in power, openly proclaimed defiance of international engagements; we are only urged to do so by the persons whom their example has depraved or their diplomacy has fascinated.

I shall only add a word or two which bear directly, or even technically, on the Motion now before your Lordships. It will not be denied that the recent correspondence, including nearly all the history of the times, will justify precautions if they are at all to be defended. It will not be denied that the encroachments which now impend on the Treaties of 1856 are serious and even violent in character. It will not be denied that, however deeply they have slept, however unresisted the arms of Russia have marched over them, those Treaties are the only basis on which a Conference is vindicated. If everything now was lost, it would remain for Parliament, as far as possible, to give a dignity to fall and to impart a splendour to calamity. If much remains to be

attempted, the more decisively the language of the House is brought to bear upon the spirit of the people the greater is the hope that, when our policy has ceased to hear a voice too long permitted to demoralise it, it may regain the heights which battlefields still recent, which graves still young, which heroes ardent yet, entitle it to occupy.

The noble Lord concluded by moving the Resolution.

After the debate,

Lord Campbell, in reply, said,—If no other noble Lord would now come forward, the House would easily perceive that he was bound, by the course of the debate, to offer a few words in answer before the question was disposed of.

First of all, he must acknowledge in the strongest terms the valuable aid he had received from his noble friend upon the right (Lord Houghton), his noble friend upon the left (the Earl of Dunraven), and his noble friend behind (Lord Dorchester). The noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby) had not on this occasion evinced to him remarkable civility, or anything, indeed, to which that term was usually applied. He (Lord Campbell) had no cause to be astonished. The noble Earl was so prodigal of urbanity, of courtesy, of deference, to those who came down to the House to weaken and to enervate his policy, that—every stock being limited—nothing of the sort was left for those who had habitually laboured to uphold and to invigorate it. At the same time, when any one, however high his post or eminent his talents, so far forgot the usages of Parliament as to exalt himself into an arbiter of speaking, and to describe as “pompous platitude or confused rhetoric” the train of reasoning he was utterly unable to encounter, he (Lord Campbell) felt at liberty to view him as oppressed by care, upset by responsibility, or inflamed by the criticisms of which he knew himself to be the object.

It was easy to re-state the grounds on which the Motion had been vindicated—as adapted to render war less probable, and to support the British Representative in any Conference which happened. Under neither of these heads had it been resisted as superfluous or mischievous. He (Lord Campbell) had defended it by arguments which, according to the noble Earl, were quite beyond his comprehension. He was bound to offer arguments, and he had done so; but he was not bound to furnish to the noble Earl the comprehension he disclaimed, and without which it usually occurred that arguments were useless.

As a great part of his (Lord Campbell's) remarks had been directed against the Russian school, the bitter mode in which the noble Earl alluded to them could only lead to one impression—namely, that in that school he had now become a pupil. One object of the Motion was to encourage the Government to adopt various precautions they had not yet adopted, and which, in the opinion of the public, it was now essential to adopt. The noble Viscount (Viscount Bury) had objected that the Treaties of 1856 were now too obsolete to mention. Whenever the noble Viscount approached the correspondence—he did not seem yet to have done so—he would find that a Conference was vindicated urged on nothing but the basis of those Treaties.

As to the appeal of another noble Viscount (Viscount Cardwell) against any division, he (Lord Campbell) regarded him as far too much identified with the late Prime Minister to guide him, or to direct the House, upon an Eastern subject. The Government had resolved—although the noble Earl the Secretary of State was wholly unsupported even by his colleagues—in deference to him to move the previous question. He (Lord Campbell), in concert with his noble friends, should resolve how to act according to the temper of the House at the very moment when the question was submitted to it.

March 12th, 1878.

THE EASTERN QUESTION—RUSSIA AND THE PORTE—THE CONFERENCE.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising pursuant to notice, to call attention to the precautions which appear to be desirable before Great Britain enters the approaching Conference, and to move for any recent diplomatic correspondence with Her Majesty's Government on the terms of peace between Russia and the Porte, said : My Lords, although it would not be consistent with the usages of this House, as generally followed, or with the respect which I have always entertained for it, to submit a motion of any kind, without a single argument in favour of it, no very long one seems to be required in this instance. The terms of peace between Russia and the Porte are not, as we are told, officially communicated, and the Government are not enabled to distribute them. There is no complaint, at least from me, upon this point. In ordinary intercourse, the necessity of seeing those terms has been, perhaps, in some degree exaggerated.

It is clear that Russia will desire to retain her present acquisitions, until the European Powers intervene, in the form which so long a parturition is maturing. The principle of *Uti possidetis* must appear to her to sum up, if not all law, human and Divine, at least the better part of equity and policy, at present. If the Conference is free to overrule them, the terms of peace afford but little scope for curiosity. If it is not, but one result is likely to present itself. On the other hand, from

Constantinople and St. Petersburg, from Berlin and Vienna, comments have probably been made by eminent diplomatists, as to what is going on between the two belligerents, which would do a great deal to guide opinion in this country, possibly to animate it. But we depend at this peculiar juncture on opinion for our safety. Such comments I have asked for. However, this is not a Motion to be urged upon a Government if they have no such correspondence, or if they think it dangerous to produce it.

Before proceeding further, I owe an apology to the House for venturing to trouble them at any length, with an interval so short, after the last Motion I brought forward. Nothing would induce me to adopt that course but our exceptional position. A hostile army at the gates of the capital we are entitled to defend—and much more than entitled—must alter the routine of individuals and assemblies. It must force upon them many things they would have otherwise avoided.

The Notice engages me to call attention to precautions seemingly desirable before the Conference is entered. Whether they are or not depends upon the view adopted of its function. My Lords, the approaching Conference in one striking aspect differs from all which modern history has presented. Whichever you refer to—that of Westphalia or Utrecht, that which closed the Seven Years' War, that of Vienna, or that of 1856—this observation might be generalised. The attempt has always been to appraise the results of war, and to embody them in articles—to translate military loss and military gain into the conclusions of a settlement.

Now the function is diametrically opposite. It might be shadowed out nearly in this way. It is to prevent a superstructure of acquisition from being established on a basis of success, although a basis of that kind as yet has always had the superstructure now to be avoided. On the other hand, this function is not beyond the range of possible success—first,

because the European Powers surpass Russia when united in their force ; secondly, because every one of them, if swayed by arguments of interest or arguments of duty, would be ready to oppose her. But it will be a new, unprecedented masterpiece of diplomatic energy. Your Lordships will not readily assume that, unless remarkable precautions are adopted, the world is about to see what in the lapse of time it has never been permitted to contemplate. The right of Europe to aspire to a result so different from the usual one no doubt is incontestable. That the war was not begun in the interest of Eastern Christianity is clear, if only from this fact—that it was never sanctioned by the Patriarch of Constantinople, by the Armenian Patriarch, or by the Exarch of Bulgaria.

In these venerable dignitaries Eastern Christianity has patrons more authoritative than the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) upon that bench and the late Prime Minister beyond it, however little either of the two may recognise the circumstance. If Russia was a mandatory—as at one time she asserted—the Powers who employed her are entitled to revise and to reject the work she has performed. If she was not a mandatory, she was an outlaw ; and, as an outlaw, is exposed to general restraint. The clearness of the right would not, however, take away the difficulty of the function I have pointed to.

By glancing at a few of the tasks which apparently devolve on the British Representative in any Conference which happens, I should hope still further to pave the way for the precautions it would be otherwise imprudent to advert to. He will have, as I contend, to maintain the Treaties of 1856 up to this point—that they should not be given up for any Russian object. Even if the Sultan quitted European Turkey altogether—a prospect upon which I do not hazard an opinion, and only mention hypothetically—it would be essential to maintain the void against a Russian tenure. It

is idle to construct, as many reasoners are doing, the mental fabric of Byzantine empires and Byzantine federations, when you have a hostile army at San Stefano, when the occupation of Gallipoli is threatened, when villages are taken on the Bosphorus, when the Mediterranean is approached. Russia, where she is, defeats such projects altogether. The time for their discussion is summed up in an old tense, which the Phil-Hellene no doubt recalls with glowing admiration. It was called by the grammarians the *paulo post futurum*.

The first task of the negotiator will be in the name of the Treaties to evacuate a space, whatever creed or nationality is destined to reoccupy it. So far as ingenuity can do anything to undermine or to attenuate the Treaties of 1856, it has not been neglected. But they are not devoured yet, even by their authors. Their heirs have not succeeded in effacing them. As soon as the attack begins, on the ground of Ottoman resistance at Constantinople to what is humorously termed "the voice of Europe"—by way of proving General Ignatieff to be an eminent ventriloquist—the unanswered despatch of the Sublime Porte on January 25th of last year is summoned to the rescue. As soon as the Protocol before the war began is urged to overthrow them, the unanswered despatch of Her Majesty's Government on May 1st effectually parries the manœuvre. As soon as it is urged that Russian arms have superseded them, the declaration which inaugurated the Black Sea Conference is summarily drawn out of the recesses which contain it. As soon as their antiquity is mentioned to their prejudice—the antiquity of twenty years—their second birth in 1871 is usefully commemorated. At last the Governments of Europe are appealing to them. Like Mount Ararat, they rise above the waters of invasion. The diplomatic ark is resting on their summit.

But there is a second task for the negotiator of this country. He has on special grounds to re-establish the

protectorate of the races subject to the Porte which the Crimean war had vindicated for Great Britain. It is worth while to remark, if only for a minute, how that protectorate escaped us. It flourished, and it led to many salutary things, until the resignation of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. The withdrawal of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe by the Government of that time was the first blow to its efficiency. It continued, with diminished force, under Sir Henry Bulwer, afterwards under Lord Lyons, and last of all under Sir Henry Elliot up to 1870. Then arrived the turning-point, which cannot be too accurately noted. From the moment of the concessions to Prince Gortchakoff the British Embassy was lowered indescribably in its authority at Constantinople. Simultaneously, by the misfortunes of the Franco-German war the French Embassy was paralysed. From that time there was no bar to Russian supremacy in the capital. The Austrian and German Embassies were both instructed to adhere to it, or favour it. The Holy Alliance could be traced in every office of Stamboul, in every station on the Bosphorus.

Now, the whole case of those who would oppose my proposition—that the negotiator ought to re-establish our influence—is summed up in the hope that Russian power effectually replaces it. If Russian power was any check to Ottoman misgovernment from 1870 to 1875, it must have wholly passed away. But, according to the school accustomed to inveigh against the Porte, at that very period it culminated in its errors. Again, if Russian supremacy over the Porte was any check to Ottoman misgovernment, it must have passed away during the eight years the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi was in vigour, and assured to Russia a preponderance which the Treaty of Kainardji has been thought—but not correctly—to have given her.

On this point there is an authoritative witness who, in our various discussions, I think, has never been referred to.

During that period—in 1841—the French Government, directed by the illustrious M. Guizot, sent out a commissioner to explore the state of the Bulgarians, which had been recently disturbed. M. Blanqui was the person chosen. He rode from Belgrade to Constantinople. He drew up a report. He published an octavo. In that volume, which I have long possessed, and have often been on the point of citing to the House, the picture which he gives of maladministration is darker than those which here are sometimes founded upon consular reports, or those which out of doors have not a consular report to justify their tenor. M. Blanqui is the dormant scourge—at least the dormant refutation—of those who hold that the ascendancy of Russia suffices for the welfare of the races subject to the Porte, and all the more because he shares their love of Eastern Christianity.

On grounds of this kind the negotiator ought to re-establish our Protectorate. Unless he does, the agitation of the country and the language of the Foreign Office for two years will have been fruitless. The negotiator has, besides, another task which cannot be forgotten. If it falls within the duty of Great Britain to claim a protectorate over these races, it falls within it to uphold or to revive the constitution recently put down. However tentative and crude, it implies a check to the despotic power which has led to their misgovernment, to the despotic power which has increased since the extinction of the Janissaries. But here the argument may seem to bring me into controversy with the reasoners—well known to the House—who openly denounce that constitution as illusory and mischievous. But these reasoners have never yet employed a fact, much less an argument, against it. Even if they had, the testimony of Mr. Layard on the spot might do a little to outbalance them. Their method is a wily one. It seems to check reply. It certainly economises intellect. On every occasion they refer to the noble Marquess the former

Plenipotentiary as their authority and shelter. Any one who casually listened to them without a further source of information would suppose that the noble Marquess was the author of a folio against the constitution they disparage, or that he had brought to bear upon it a series of invectives in the style of Junius ; or set up an organ—the very thing he disapproves of—which week by week, or day by day, was laying waste its mischievous pretensions or intolerable principles.

What are the facts ? It really is not useless, or wholly unamusing, to refer to them. In our Blue-books the noble Marquess is the writer of one despatch upon the subject. I have not been contented with my own research, but engaged a friend to look all through the Papers of last year to see if he could find another. What does that despatch amount to ? If I am able to interpret it, it amounts only to the temperate assertion that, although the constitution might be irreproachable as a first attempt in a new path, it was not such an absolute security for certain definite reforms as foreign interference. The remark is wholly incontestable. All the world must see that the coercion of the Embassies—however undesirable an agency—is more certain to attain a given point they aim at than Chambers which must hear debates and then determine by majorities. To my knowledge the founders of that constitution do not object to the language of the noble Marquess, although no doubt they bitterly resent the language which is built upon it. They hold with him that at the outset the constitution was uncertain and precarious—still more if Russia crossed the Pruth to overthrow it.

On these grounds I should contend that to revive the constitution would be at least among the tasks of the negotiator. If, indeed, the Protectorate of Great Britain is restored, the constitution may be less important. So, if the constitution is brought back, the Protectorate is not so indispensable as otherwise it would be. The two agencies conduce to the

same purpose. But it will probably occur to the reflection of the House that, if the negotiator succeeds in one task, he is pretty sure to do so in the other ; that, as the obstacle will be the same, so also, if he fail in one, he will be apt to fail in both of them together.

The general conclusion to which I would draw the House, by glancing at the function of the Conference and at the toils of the negotiator, is that, without imposing preparations from Great Britain, the whole thing is absolutely hopeless ; that she ought to approach it with the obvious resolution of becoming a belligerent unless the Conference responds to the direction she would give it. In this sense the first precaution, I submit, resides in a single word—mobilisation. As, however, the word has been employed in different senses, I define it as that which furnishes an army with everything necessary to transport itself, whether by land or sea, from one place to another. The next precaution to be mentioned is that of despatching a conspicuous force to Malta, with a view to the impression it would make upon the Powers of the Continent. It must appear to every one who reasons that twenty thousand soldiers there have greater diplomatic influence than fifty thousand while remaining in this country. During the autumn I have twice adverted to this subject. The third precaution which suggests itself may need a little more consideration. It is to render the Militia—during a restricted period—available for foreign service, although it does not follow that they would ever be required to join it. Whether they are or are not, a great political impression will be equally created.

The existence of the Volunteers as a replacing force would justify this measure if the Volunteers received a slight improvement in efficiency by means of a detail which might not interest your Lordships. Good authorities consider it opposed to every maxim of defence and of economy to lock up two extensive armies in the United Kingdom on the sedentary

principle. That accomplished person Mr. Windham, when Secretary for War, at the beginning of the century, explained its inconveniences. But they are greater now than at that stage of our history. If invasion was constantly at hand, while foreign expeditions scarcely had to be contemplated, the system would be sensible and practical ; but when invasion is much more remote than it was in the time of Mr. Windham, while foreign expeditions may be essential to our objects, it is not easily defended. It has only grown up in its present form since 1859, when Volunteers were re-established.

To grasp the question with precision it is useful to keep one eye upon the mass of guarantees for which in a collective form we are indebted to a noble Marquess opposite, the other on the fact that since 1870 no Power has been well situated for invasion of Great Britain.

The next precaution I intend to refer to very briefly is that of adopting every measure by which the fleet would be enabled to advance into the Black Sea without the slightest insecurity when egress is desirable. What those measures are military men have pointed out to me, and they can better state them to your Lordships.

But it is not to be contested that only in the Black Sea the fleet will have the greatest weight as to the tenor of the Conference, because there it menaces Odessa and retards communication between the Russian armies and their basis. By the amended articles of 1871 the fleet may enter the Black Sea whenever it is thought desirable to send it. It would be easily admitted that nations, to be really great, must utilise whatever fortune has bestowed upon them. But there is something more to be remembered. From time to time they ought to snatch a gain out of their losses. The British fleet commanding the Black Sea will be a better answer to the Russian manifesto of 1870 than any of the various despatches it elicited.

The last precaution is one which I approach with more anxiety than any of the others. It seems to me to transcend the others in importance, because it would be nearly certain to produce them, although in itself it is neither of a naval nor a military character. To divest this precaution as long as possible of everything which bears on living individuals, it might be mentioned as a common law regarding foreign policy in our country that duality—by which I mean the action of two rival and conflicting minds—has frequently impaired, while unity—by which I mean the direction of a single mind—has always added to its excellence.

During the Government of Lord Chatham it may be easily observed that the unparalleled success of foreign policy arose greatly from the fact that no one else within the Cabinet was suffered to disturb it. The same remark occurs during the early years of Mr. Pitt's Administration, before Lord Grenville occupied the Foreign Office.

On the other hand, when men even so distinguished as Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell were endeavouring to guide it both together, the evils of duality were not without some illustrations—for instance, on the Danish Question of 1864, and as regards the *coup d'état* in France—which any one may summon to his memory.

Without building for a moment either on the impressions of society, or the assertions of the press, but on grounds officially avowed, it may be stated that the duality in question has now reached a pitch unknown in our annals. Such grounds alone could justify the statement. As within a Cabinet no one is entitled to betray, so beyond no one can be qualified to fathom or interpret it. It belongs to the historical events of this very Session that the First Minister considered that the fleet ought to advance from Besika Bay into the Dardanelles when the Secretary of State was conscientiously opposed to such a measure. At that stage neither can be censured. Each had

a right to his opinion on a question so momentous. Nor am I engaged in reflecting on one, or on the other, or on both, because I point to the arraignment of duality. What followed? The fleet advanced, and it retreated. In consequence of its retreat—this sad and overwhelming fact has been imparted to many noble lords by a most eminent authority—the celebrated lines between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora were finally abandoned; Constantinople was at once exposed to Russian occupation. In consequence of its retreat, it had eventually to reach the neighbourhood of Constantinople, without the sanction of the Porte, in such a manner as to give that Power—with France and Austria, who are both entitled to defend it by the Treaty of April 15th, 1856—a right of war against Great Britain.

My Lords, the upshot is that duality, and not the guilt of any person you can specify, has brought about the present situation, in which the naval force incurs considerable hazard; in which the ally debates, the enemy advances, and the victim is in league with him; in which the army we might have led, have supplemented, disciplined, has vanished. It is, therefore, in the name of everything valued out of doors, of everything sacred to the Legislature, the time to close the perilous and inadmissible duality, which never ought to have existed, and to which such grave calamities may justly be ascribed. The appointment of a new Secretary of State would do nothing to correct it. It might even seriously aggravate it. The public interest demands, excited numbers may soon imperatively call for, the concentration of the Foreign Office in the hands of the First Minister, until the present juncture is surmounted. It is wholly superficial to object that such a measure would too much increase his toils, when really it would lighten them. The greatest official toil—Prince Bismarck recently explained it in public—is the necessity to counteract another, to overrule or to persuade him. It

is not by demonstrations, articles, or speeches, that this result should be effected, although, perhaps, they might contribute to it. The late Emperor of the French has been accredited with this searching observation : “There are certain counsels which a man must owe to himself, and not to those by whom he is surrounded.” The noble Earl the Secretary of State has only to revert to the course his own mind had seriously prompted. If the post is not filled up in the usual manner, in less dangerous times, when the head of the Government is less required to watch and interfere in the Department, he may usefully reoccupy it. With such a definite arrangement, no self-sacrifice is wanted. The noble Earl would rather act upon the fiat of a judicious patriotism and a sensible ambition, both together. He would not, like Curtius—of whom we heard so often in the House of Commons—leap into a gulf for the advantage of his country ; but, unlike Curtius, actually leap out of one and close it up as he retires. If there is a better mode of finishing the duality which weighs upon the Empire, it ought at least to be suggested.

My Lords, if these precautions were adopted, there is reason to believe, from their official Press, that the German Empire would be more likely to act with us at the Conference. If they do, its proper aims are seen at once to be attainable. The precautions I have mentioned would manifestly strengthen and encourage the Hungarians, by whom alone Austria can be fixed again upon the salutary path to which in 1856 she had determined to adhere. In France they would awaken the set of public men who are anxious to withdraw their country from unnecessary fears, unfounded calculations, and a culpable indifference to the sacrifices, the efforts, which she made in the Crimea. Last of all, in Russia they might lead the governing authorities at first to tremble for their spoils and then to glance at their assurance.

It is said by persons of the highest information that Russia is becoming more exorbitant; that another retrogression of the British fleet is urged as a preliminary to the Conference. In that case such measures are demanded. But it is difficult to grasp the truth; and I will take the other case, advanced by some, that Russian moderation is increasing, that demands have been attenuated and rapacity controlled. But what has led, if it exists, to such a temper? It is the renovated vigour of this country. It is the reawakened sense of those who were deluded. It is that chloroform administered on platforms has ceased to lull and to enchain. It is that those by whom it was administered are now defended by constabulary force against the just resentment of the people. The aggressor falls back before Great Britain who emerges. Is that a reason why she should withdraw herself to vain repose and fatuous security? Is it a reason for omitting one of the precautions I have brought before your Lordships?

It may, however, be remarked that, while these precautions are appropriate, and while the last of them is vitally essential, I have adopted an unusual course in stating them to-night, with no official character to warrant the proceeding. No doubt, in common times it would have been arrogant and imprudent in a high degree to act in such a manner. My answer is, the times are painfully exceptional. So long as the duality on which I have touched at so much length continues, in the established sense there is not any Government, however gifted all the individuals who avowedly compose it. So long as a portion of the noble Lords beneath—it would be most unjust and inexact to place them in one category—are swayed by open advocates of Russia, while the rank and file of the party they appear to be seceding from listen to those advocates with wonder, with regret and incredulity, in the established sense there is not any Opposition. The Opposition

has become a martial field for rival forces to contend in by alternate weeks or by alternate fortnights, with a view that each may guide the course of the Executive. If an Opposition of the regular united form was in existence, the backward movement of the fleet would long ago have been held up to public indignation more distinctly than it has been. A monarchy so constitutional as ours can hardly be expected to replace at once the well-known powers which are thrown into abeyance.

A natural result has been developed. Already foreign policy has been appropriated by the masses. The law of nations is defended in Hyde Park and in Trafalgar Square, because in Downing Street it is not followed as it used to be. Under these circumstances an individual may not appear to take too much upon himself if, after years of anxious labour on the subject, he indicates a path which is not that of war or of dishonour.

My Lords, there is another ground on which a mode of acting otherwise too bold admits of easy vindication. It is the series of advantages which Russia has obtained, together with the obvious insufficiency of all the constituted powers in the State to balance her diplomacy. It may be viewed without a shadow of resentment. No one who has long allowed his thoughts to be directed to these questions, can withhold reluctant admiration from a long and curious display of mental force and mental perseverance in that line, although Great Britain may have suffered from it.

Soon after the Crimean war the Russian Government succeeded in uniting the Danubian Principalities against the efforts of Lord Palmerston, as a better lever of any conquest to be gradually approached, persuading her more fatuous disciples that it was designed as a barrier to lessen her temptation and to hinder her advances. After that—but not till Lord Palmerston had passed away—the Servian fortresses

were virtually appropriated, with what results your Lordships easily remember.

Next came the forward and defiant step of 1870, with all the triumphs which it generated. Within three years the Holy Alliance—so long extinct—was re-established at the dictate of St. Petersburg. But it was not to be a sentiment or an abstraction. Its activity commenced at once in the shape of the commercial treaties with the vassal principalities, of which the design is now proclaimed, and then was manifest to all who were not anxious to be blind to it. Without a breathing time, the Herzegovinian insurrection was set on foot—in what manner Consul Holmes has long ago explained to us. The Andrassy Note was but the prelude to the Berlin Memorandum, by which, so far as diplomacy extends, Russia appropriated to her system every Power but Great Britain. In a few months—by the results of a factitious movement in Bulgaria—she lured Great Britain to Constantinople, and made her there the very echo she required. Again, Great Britain was entangled in the Protocol which seemed to be the sudden cause of the invasion, when twenty years had really been preparing it. In the meantime, the most imposing as well as indefatigable speaker in the other House of Parliament was engaged to agitate the masses in its favour. For the first time a Russian Party was established in the capital, not as it had been in Warsaw to annihilate, but as it had been in Vienna to perplex and to enfeeble, as it had been in Berlin to divide a nation from its rulers, as it had been in Paris to mock by hope and chain to insignificance. The result is now before us.

It is clear not only to your Lordships, not only to the Legislature, but to every farmer, publican, and artisan in the community, that ever since the Crimean war Great Britain has been outdone and overweighted in the struggle with her adversary. At such a time, however great the risk, no

politician would be entitled to withhold the faintest service he can render. It may be objected that against a Power so remarkable for subtlety and so victorious in practice the enumerated measures will be useless; that it is too late to fortify the Conference, or deliver Europe from the clouds which seem to burst upon her. If that were so, it would be still worth while for Great Britain to escape the heart-rending reproach to which a great republic of antiquity exposed itself, in circumstances far too similar to those in which we are descending. The House may ask to what reproach I have alluded. It is long since I have seen the original. It used to run, however, in this manner: "The aggressor has not conquered you; he has prevailed over your inertness and fatuity. You are not subdued; but you were never roused into the dignity of effort." To shelter us from that reproach, not one of the precautions mentioned can be easily dispensed with.

I now submit the Motion to the House, according to notice.

After the debate :—

My Lords, I shall not long detain the House, although perhaps, some answer is incumbent on me. Let me congratulate my noble friend on the left (the Earl of Dunraven) upon having once more proved that the terms of Liberal and Russian are not entirely identical. As to the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll), it is satisfactory to draw from him the admission that a Russian Protectorate of Eastern Christianity has ceased to be the system which he favours. The noble Earl the late Secretary of State (Earl Granville) has revealed in somewhat extraordinary terms his dissent from the opinions I have advocated. There is nothing to astonish in the fact of that dissent, or even that discrepancy. The

noble Earl has more or less encouraged the aggression on the Porte ; I have constantly endeavoured to deprive it of its pretexts. The noble Earl has thrown a veil, so far as he could do so, over the character of the new Holy Alliance ; I have done my best to drag it into light, before it was too late to counteract it. The noble Earl accepts the late Prime Minister as an oracle or an authority upon the Eastern Question ; in common with an immense majority in both Houses of Parliament, confined to no one party in the State, I repudiate him altogether as a leader on the subject. Beyond that, the discrepancy between the noble Earl and me was manifested at a far more early stage of these remarkable transactions. When the three Powers opened their design upon the vassal principalities, in 1875, I repeatedly adverted to it. The noble Earl opposed all consideration of it until official papers were produced. When, after a long delay, the papers were brought before us, I originated a discussion which had an echo in the world. The noble Earl withdrew himself to Goodwood Races. On Eastern matters, after such a circumstance, your Lordships will not require me to contend at any length with such an adversary. The noble Earl the Secretary of State (the Earl of Derby) judiciously avoided too much expression of opinion on the last precaution I upheld. None at all is called for upon his part. He declared, however, that the greater part of my proposals was anticipated by the Government. What more could be desired ? I am not sure whether he consented to produce the kind of correspondence which the Motion calls for. If he declines to do so upon public grounds, I shall be ready to withdraw the Motion.

July 29th, 1878.

THE CONGRESS AT BERLIN—THE ANGLO-TURKISH CONVENTION.

OBSERVATIONS.

LORD CAMPBELL rose, pursuant to notice, to call attention to the Protocols of the Congress at Berlin, and to the Convention of June 4th between Great Britain and the Porte, and said : My Lords, when the Protocols were laid upon the table many speeches were delivered. Even on Friday last, from a question of the noble Earl (the Earl of Rosebery) upon an isolated point, there arose a rather general discussion to which my present notice refers. If, on either of these occasions, the topic which appears to me the most important had been noticed, I should for many reasons have been indisposed to encroach at all just now upon the patience of the House. The topic is the Russian occupation, and the degree to which it has been sanctioned.

My Lords, I have not put a resolution on the paper, because it did not seem to be a moment when any resolution, even if adopted by your Lordships, would lead to practical results. Even if Parliament advised the Crown to withhold ratification from some parts of the Treaty, and, if it were withheld, as far as I can learn among diplomatists, the Treaty would not fail to operate in Europe. As to arraignment of the Government on the Eastern Question, it requires the transactions of many years to be exhibited, and involves materials beyond human force at this time of the Session even to advert to. It could only be appropriate in order to bring about a change which nobody yet aims at. But I will move for some documents

which it would, perhaps, be easy to produce, and which would throw a certain light upon the occupation I have mentioned.

It is not requisite to dwell upon the Protocols, because they were alluded to on Friday, and the subject thus in some degree anticipated. The first, in which the Prime Minister, in spite of all the eloquence he is said to have brought to bear upon the Congress, was unable to effect the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the positions which they occupied, may be regarded as a sample. It illustrates the spirit by which the Congress was directed, and which the three Plenipotentiaries* habitually encountered. What I propose is during a few minutes to examine, as a whole, the Convention and the Treaty under some divisions which make it easier to judge of them, although it is to one point alone I wish to draw the more particular attention of your Lordships.

The first division which occurs is that of stipulation, to which a qualified degree of praise may be accorded. It contains, however, nothing, as I view it, but the arrangement by which, as the noble Marquess who went to Berlin (the Marquess of Salisbury) has explained, the Porte is sheltered from the weight of the indemnity demanded. It may not be agreeable to the bondholders of the Sultan, since one class—at least one individual—must be perpetually underpaid, to keep his empire from destruction. The interpretation of the noble Marquess is disputed as to the contract which exists; but, if accurate, it cannot be denied that a mischievous effect of a destructive war has been ingeniously parried.

The next division would refer to several arrangements which admit of plausible defence, although they may be seriously criticised. As I regard the subject, it includes the whole mass of stipulations upon Cyprus and upon Asia Minor. It is here important to remark that no new obligation to defend has been contracted. Ever since 1856 the obligation

* The Earl of Beaconsfield, the Marquess of Salisbury, and Lord Odo Russell.

has existed. From that period we were bound to defend the Ottoman dominions, either in Asia or in Europe, either with others or alone. Of course, the more recent the engagement, the less decorous to connive at it. But that is all the difference. So, too, the right to interfere as a defending Power previously existed. In the same division one might reckon what has been done in Bessarabia. It is to be regretted as a Russian triumph over Europe. But it was necessary that Roumania, after making war upon her suzerain, should incur a penalty of some kind. Nothing better might have been acceptable at Berlin, where the vassal has, of course, considerable influence.

The third division would consist of several arrangements objectionable on the face of them, and highly mischievous when separately viewed ; but which may have a latent plea as conducive to some great and distant object, if Ottoman authority should fail to be perpetuated on this side of the Bosphorus. To this category I should venture to refer the independence of Servia and Roumania—in itself at once an element of conflict and a premium on rebellion ; at the same time the creation of another vassal principality, which is sure to follow the example of the former ones ; again, the mode in which Eastern Roumelia is to be virtually subjected to the embassies at Constantinople, and the strife it will produce. To that class I should assign, too, the Austrian possession of Herzegovina and Bosnia. They all would seem to merit censure ; but all may have a hidden vindication in some beneficent design to which they may be gradually subordinated.

The last division to be noticed is that of measures which no policy excuses, which no kind of argument can possibly defend. The Russian occupation is the only one I shall advert to in this category. The essential point to keep in view is that there is no security whatever for its ceasing. There will be innumerable pretexts for extending it. The new Austrian possession of Herzegovina and Bosnia is among

them. Austria has never been a check to Russian progress during the whole of these transactions, although it might have frequently been urged it was her interest to be so. Those who feel convinced that in a year the occupation will determine should be referred to Polish history. It is the specific medicine for credulity of that kind. But there is something else to be considered. At this moment the Russian occupation is causing the iniquities and horrors which the two Mr. Bartletts, authoritative witnesses just returned from European Turkey, have, in their own names, so vividly delineated. These gentlemen are brothers. One is a contributor to literature on the Eastern Question ; the other was engaged by Lady Burdett-Coutts to assist in organising and distributing her well-known fund for refugees and victims of the conflict. They have both addressed themselves to that journal whose circulation is allowed to be the largest. According to these gentlemen, a hundred villages can be named which, subsequently to the armistice, have been razed by Cossacks and Bulgarians. There is now, in consequence, to the extent of many thousands, a starving and a houseless population. Eight hundred people, who were lately sent back to their homes under promise of Russian protection, were robbed of everything and brutally ill-treated by Bulgarians in sight of Russian troops. Near Constantinople mosques and graveyards have been knocked to pieces. There is a statement with regard to the Bulgarian police and Russian officers which I refrain from communicating to your Lordships. The occupation of the Russians during the last five months is responsible for five hundred thousand deaths. Even if the occupation were bound to cease when, in an inverse sense, it had repeated the atrocities of which we heard so much two years ago, it could not be defended.

Instead of dwelling upon these gloomy scenes, let me remind the House that the existence of Russian armies, where the

Treaty will permit them to remain, is certain to preclude the action of the now suspended Ottoman Assemblies, the best and latest check to the despotic power so long regarded as incapable of adequately governing. It is at the same time a bar to every improvement the British Embassy might call for. It utterly annihilates their influence. The proposition will come home to every one who knows Constantinople, and the noble Marquess the Secretary of State (the Marquess of Salisbury) is now himself among the number. But there is a larger and a graver sense in which the occupation ought to be regarded.

Whatever prepossessions or convictions he may have in favour of that system, every one must see that late events have weakened the arrangements the Crimean war was undertaken to establish. No one, although he may decline to initiate or countenance, can help canvassing and listening to schemes by which it is proposed to guard Constantinople against Russia without the slightest reference to Ottoman dominion. On the character of these schemes I do not hazard an opinion at this moment. The point to be insisted on is that the Russian occupation as effectually defeats them, as it is a positive impediment to every improved and salutary form of government under the direction of the Sultan. We have heard of Byzantine Empires, although the term has not been properly defined. How can you possibly establish a Byzantine Empire in the face of a Russian army which, for years to come, may hold Adrianople? A Danubian federation was long ago suggested by a very eminent Hungarian, but certainly will not be framed while Russian soldiers still command the passes of the Balkans—which they may do without a limit. But projects of that magnitude would be difficult to realise in any case, even without an intercepting army to prohibit them.

Considerable reasoners have urged, with a more practical, more statesmanlike acumen, that if Austria only had the

suzerainty of Moldavia and Wallachia, which have been withdrawn from the Sultan, and which cannot stand alone, the Russian march to Constantinople would be barred, since war with Austria—possibly with Germany behind her—would be a necessary incident of trying it. But even such a combination would be useless when Russian armies are so placed that they no longer have the Pruth and Danube to get over. It is not my aim or hope to-night to do much justice to the topic. Let me only add that the occupation, whether of Bulgaria or Eastern Roumelia, for the time allowed, has not a shadow of ground, in the advantage of the inhabitants or in the interests of Europe, since, if it had, the Protocols would have revealed it.

Even if the occupation is irrevocable, so far as it is sanctioned by the Congress, it is not useless to refer to it. The question leads to several conclusions as regards the British fleet maintaining its position, as regards the hazard of a struggle at no distant time, as regards alliances to be created or revived in order to prepare for it. Above all, a due attention to this subject may correct a doubtful spirit which has recently been manifested—the spirit which is ready to give up political engagements for material possessions, to exult in Cyprus, to forget the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus; as if all the islands of the Archipelago could be a set-off for abandoning the European interests of which twenty years ago we were—of which so much more recently we meant to be—the guardians. But that disposition would also be restrained by anything which brings in an authentic shape before the House the effects the Russian occupation is producing, and enables it to see how far the witnesses I have invoked have faithfully described them.

I move for copies of any diplomatic correspondence with Her Majesty's Government on the state of European Turkey since the termination of hostilities.

March 24th, 1878.

TREATY OF BERLIN—THE BRITISH FLEET.

OBSERVATIONS.—QUESTION.

MY LORDS,—It is not in order to address the House on any new phase the Eastern Question has arrived at that I have put this question on the paper; but only with a view to the two inquiries it contains, and which, it seems to me, the present moment calls for. It has been alleged in a variety of quarters, and according to the ordinary channels of intelligence in the other House of Parliament—that the fleet has left the Sea of Marmora, where it had so long continued. It will hardly be denied that your Lordships are entitled to an official declaration on a matter so important, and one which in this House has been so seriously canvassed. Should the answer be that the fleet continues where it was, the second question has not any special urgency at present. But should the answer be that it has gone back to the Mediterranean, the second question unavoidably suggests itself. The presence of the fleet in the vicinity of Constantinople tended on many grounds, which this is not the moment to go into, to promote the backward movement of the Russian armies, according to the stipulation I have mentioned in the Notice, in nine months over the Danube, in three months more across the Russian frontier. Should the fleet, therefore, have been withdrawn—a step on which I offer no opinion—it seems desirable to know how far, in other ways, the execution of the 22nd Article in the Treaty of Berlin may be depended on.

In a despatch dated January 26th, which cannot be too widely known or accurately studied, the noble Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has explained that Russia has neglected to conform to other portions of the Treaty. As regards the Article in question, it is evident that there are many motives to leave it unperformed, and a variety of pretexts for neglecting to adhere to it. There are even symptoms of reluctance to observe it, if it is true, as I have lately seen in a Constantinople journal, that 40,000 troops have lately come from Russia, to replace those which seem to be departing. In that respect the distant wars in which we are engaged must add to what we may perhaps consider the temptations of St. Petersburg—first because they carry off and occupy the military power of this country ; next, because they lull the vigilance with which the events of Eastern Europe used to be regarded in it. Whatever may be the case with individuals, the public at large are not inclined to the labour of keeping three considerable subjects in the memory together. The House may therefore wish to know whether the fleet has been withdrawn ; and, if it has, whether the complete evacuation on the part of Russia of a position menacing to Europe is secured ?

May 19th, 1879.

TREATY OF BERLIN, ARTICLE 22—OCCUPATION
OF BULGARIA AND EASTERN ROUMELIA.

MOTION FOR CORRESPONDENCE.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to Article 22 of the Treaty of Berlin, as it relates to the period during which the occupation of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia was sanctioned ; and to move for the correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and other Powers on the subject, said :—

My Lords,—In the absence of my noble friend whose question stood first (Lord Stanley of Alderley), I am called on to address you. As it may be thought that comments on the 22nd Article in the Treaty of Berlin might have been offered to the House on May 16th, I will at once encounter that objection to the notice. No doubt the topic was alluded to by those who mixed in the debate, and any one who rose might feel at liberty to mention it. But in so vast an issue as the merit or demerit of the Government in all their European and Asiatic policy, to fix upon it the attention of the House would scarcely have been possible. But even if it had been possible, according to the view which guides me, the object of the Notice would not have been compassed.

My Lords, ever since the Treaty of Berlin there has been no greater matter of solicitude, to those who reason justly on the Eastern Question, than the existence of a Russian army beyond the Pruth, the Danube and the Balkans. It seems to me a version of the Treaty has been sanctioned which, if

it goes unchallenged, must tend to prolong the occupation altogether. But it can only be challenged with effect by notice to call attention to the subject. Whether or not a given statement in the midst of a discussion like that of Friday last goes beyond the House is utterly precarious. But a notice, however briefly or inadequately handled, must place it upon record, that the interpretation which keeps Russian troops in the dominion of the Sultan longer than otherwise they would be, is disputed. Besides, other noble lords may impart to the notice more effect than I can give it.

Before questioning the new interpretation of Article 22, let me mention with what aim it seems to me worth while to question it at present. Of course, the old interpretation cannot be recovered when it has once been given up. No human force, no stretch of virtue at St. Petersburg or ingenuity in Downing Street, can now deliver East Roumelia and Bulgaria by May 3rd. The question now is, whether by August there will be the final exodus over the Pruth for which the Treaty has provided. But the House will readily admit that one encroachment on the Treaty, unless it is an object of remark, remonstrance, criticism or protest in the Assemblies of the signatory Powers, is nearly sure to generate another.

I now wish to offer a few words on the interpretation of the Article. By learned men it might, no doubt, be debated both ways at such a length as would alarm the Court of Chancery and keep its judgment in suspense for a considerable period. But my mode of treating it will be a short, even if it is not a convincing one. Unless analogy is cast aside, the occupation of a territory can only cease when the territory has been quitted, as the occupation of a house can only cease when the occupier leaves it. The occupation of the house would not have ceased because after the term the occupier began, in one week to pack his library, in a second to move

his horses, in a third to get his family in order for departure. Neither the occupation of a house nor the occupation of a territory has ceased until the house or territory has thoroughly reverted to the owner.

But it is said that anything may be established by analogy. Let me proceed, therefore, to the despatch of the noble Marquess to Consul Palgrave on September 30th. According to the despatch, the new *régime* in Bulgaria must begin as soon as the nine months are over, because "the provisional Administration is to cease" exactly at that moment. It is clear, therefore, that on September 30th the noble Marquess did not mean a Russian force after the nine months to linger in that country. The provisional Administration could not cease until the Russian troops had vanished. The same remark applies to East Roumelia; but I do not dwell upon it. It is better to go on with the expressions of the Article.

After the nine months in East Roumelia and Bulgaria, the closing paragraph allows three months for traversing Roumania. How could the Congress have laid down that three months might be employed in traversing Roumania, unless it held that at the beginning of the three months the other countries would be liberated? If the Russian armies may be marching within the Ottoman and the Bulgarian dominions after the nine months, they cannot be during the three months in Moldavia and Wallachia. According to the new interpretation, the Russian force, as a united whole, should be at once on both sides of the Danube, a feat without a precedent in history. No doubt, in vague terms, the forces of the Czar have been sometimes referred to as colossal. But to execute the task the new interpretation would assign to them, each individual soldier must stride—over a large and rapid flood—as a colossus.

My Lords, the same view may be supported by referring to the Protocols of Berlin. It is there distinctly seen that

Count Schouvaloff demanded nine months, in order in that time to evacuate Roumelia and Bulgaria; three months, in order in that time to evacuate the territory which lies beyond the Danube. The definitive Treaty between Russia and the Porte is based on the same principle. But it is unnecessary to refer to it, because there is a quicker mode of reaching a conclusion. No one will deny that the Article may be interpreted against the Russian claim, although he thinks it may be construed also to support it. It was interpreted against the Russian claim by the noble Duke who addressed the House on Friday; by the noble Earl the Lord Warden, who this day fortnight first elicited the present doctrine from the Government; by all the journalists of Europe until the noble Marquess spoke on that occasion; by all the most habitual reasoners on Eastern topics against the noble Marquess since his doctrine was promulgated, which they have certainly repelled, whether or not they have disposed of it.

The utmost which the new interpreters can urge is, that the stipulation is ambiguous. Let me, then, grant its ambiguity. Here public law steps in at once to rescue us from difficulty. It is the maxim of public law, as well known to Sir Robert Phillimore as Vattel, that where a passage in the Treaty is ambiguous, it is to be construed against the Power which had the most decisive voice in the formation of the Articles; on this ground—that the strongest Power has brought about the ambiguity it ought to have prevented. The mode in which Vattel reasons, in a special chapter on Treaties of Peace, is almost prophetic of the circumstances which surround us. Such treaties are nearly certain, he considers, to be fraught with ambiguity. But the Power by which a given stipulation is imposed, and not the Power on which it is imposed, must suffer loss from the obscurity. The principle is backed by a tenet of Roman law that damage

falls upon the party "cujus in potestate fuit rem apertius conscribere."

Now, it is seen clearly, by the Protocols, that the occupation was nothing but a sacrifice to a victorious invader. Neither the Sublime Porte, nor any other Power, aimed at it. It was open to Russia to intimate, in language not to be mistaken, that until the end of nine months her armies would not begin a movement of withdrawal. If the new interpretation is correct, the other Powers would have sanctioned it. If they would not have sanctioned it, the new interpretation is erroneous.

As this ground is by far the most conclusive, it would not be judicious to add another to it. Ambiguity is not denied, and ambiguity suffices to overthrow the Russian version.

My Lords, it does not follow that the Government are an object of severe reproach for an untenable interpretation of the 22nd Article. They may have had to listen during many weeks to every kind of sophistry by which it can be palliated. The members of an Opposition are not similarly circumstanced. I take no credit to myself for still adhering to the true interpretation.

Let me refer a moment to the Papers which I move for. They go to ascertain whether or not the other signatory Powers at once departed from the ground originally contemplated. Now, it is affirmed, with as much gravity as anything we have to trace to unofficial correspondence, that Austria wholly differed from the last conclusion of the Government. It is affirmed by sources which we generally credit that Count Andrassy has protested against the legal status of the Russian force after May 3rd, except between the Danube and the Pruth, where they may march or rest until August 3rd. But we are utterly devoid of all official knowledge as to the line of Austria or any signatory Power. Should the day ever come when the transactions of the

Eastern Question are reviewed, not only to entertain the House or dazzle its frequenters, or to affect opinion out of doors, but to invoke the judgment of your Lordships, it is requisite to know whether, in so grave a measure as that of allowing Russia to begin a movement at the time she ought to have completed it, Great Britain has led or followed other Powers, has been in unison with Austria or opposed and overruled her. There is nothing, therefore, useless or irrelevant in the correspondence I suggest ; nor, except in the case that no despatches were exchanged, do I imagine that the Government, or Foreign Office, or the noble Marquess who presides in that department, will be reluctant to produce them.

My Lords, although I have done it already to some extent, it may be prudent to insist again that the object of the notice is not to dress up a case against Her Majesty's Government, but to contribute, by means of the House and those who may address it, to the deliverance from Russian arms of the important region they are grasping. Some men entitled to respect, both in the House and out of it, are inclined to view that deliverance as easily attainable—indeed, as virtually accomplished. It seems to me they utterly deceive themselves ; and neither reflect with care upon the slender means which exist for the attainment of their purpose, nor the urgent motives which may lead the authorities of Russia to defeat it. As to the means, what are they ? The German Empire has repeatedly declared its inability, which may be its reluctance, to exert military power at so great a distance. Austria, as it was easy to learn during the autumn at Vienna, has been exhausted by her unexpected struggles in Herzegovina and Bosnia to a degree which greatly lessens her capacity for effort on the Danube. France and Italy, however good their dispositions, however eminent their leaders, are no more available as restraints upon

aggression in the East, than San Marino and Monaco. Great Britain—in spite of the announcement we have heard tonight—has still one anxious war to occupy her forces.

But let us turn to Russian motives. By remaining a considerable period between the Danube and the Pruth, or even where she is at present, Russia may impose upon Bulgaria the type most favourable to her objects ; ensure the general supremacy of those who represent her at Constantinople ; control the principalities which have been flung into the air without a suzerain to shelter them, without a treaty rendering it penal to attack them, and gratify the military interest by which, as yet, her foreign policy is uniformly regulated. It is true that internal difficulties tend to the recall of armies to the centre. The malevolent assailant of the Czar may, unintentionally, be the liberator of the Balkans. But we know too little to depend on such an agency as likely to outbalance the habitual and traditional influences we are perfectly acquainted with. Three documents which have been recently presented—the despatch of the noble Marquess on January 26th, the language held by Prince Dondoukoff to Lord Donoughmore, the report of Surgeon Buckle on the condition of the territory between Adrianople and Philippopolis—reveal objects so wholly inconsistent with the Treaty of Berlin, that nothing but a longer occupation of European Turkey can effect them. At least, prudent men will look back and ask how far their past anticipations have been realised in any given sphere, before depending on a new one.

At every stage of this long transaction, the kind of confidence which now prevails has been rebuked and disappointed. When the three Powers declared their intention to negotiate with Servia and Roumania, it was hoped that there was very little in it : that it was nothing but a technical arrangement ; that the Eastern Question was not going to

be resuscitated. Who would not blush, after the event, at having shared in such fatuity? It was then hoped that the Herzegovinian insurrection would burn out in its own crater. It was next hoped that the Conference of 1876 would lead to the adjustment of the new commotions which alarmed us. As soon as it collapsed, the impression was that by some other agencies a European war might be prevented. War having begun, the hope was that Constantinople would not be endangered by it. After the Treaty of Berlin it was hoped that by May 3rd there would not be a Russian soldier in Bulgaria. And now, at the end of these disheartening illusions, it is the fashion to proclaim belief in the complete evacuation by August 3rd, as if every previous vision had been systematically realised by the course of history—which disperses and exposes it.

But I will not pursue that topic beyond the point which seemed desirable to vindicate the notice; and move for the Correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and other Powers on the 22nd Article of the Treaty of Berlin.

At the close of the debate,

Lord Campbell understood, with the greatest satisfaction, the noble Marquess to recognise the ambiguity from which everything followed. He could not accede to the opinion of the noble Marquess, that to evacuate the territory between the Balkans and the Danube by May 3rd was practically difficult in the manner he contended. Although it was a military point, and he (Lord Campbell) spoke before some military critics, he would hazard the remark that had the fifty thousand men been aligned in the vicinity of the Danube at the beginning of the month, they would have effected the passage of that river by their pontoon bridges, not having an

enemy in front of them, with considerable ease in four-and-twenty hours. The view of the noble Marquess on this point appeared to him unjust to their commanders. Of course, as the noble Marquess had no despatches to produce, he would not press the Motion. Before sitting down he must acknowledge the powerful support which his noble friend who sat upon his right (Lord Houghton)—without which he could not have submitted it with so much advantage to the House—had given to his interpretation of the Treaty.

July 14th, 1879.

TREATY OF BERLIN—EVACUATION OF THE PROVINCES.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the Correspondence on the affairs of Turkey and the present position of matters with reference to the Russian evacuation of the territory on this side of the Pruth, and to move an Address to Her Majesty on the subject, said :—

My Lords,—I know how hard it is to draw attention to the subject of this Notice when the mind of Parliament is agitated by another set of circumstances. At present, except upon South Africa, the grief it has occasioned, the vicissitudes it offers, nearly every one is doomed to find unwilling ears or make unwelcome observations. I will, therefore, pass at once to a few details, which may be easily recalled, and which at least show that the topic now before us is appropriate and necessary to the moment.

It is now July 14th. On August 3rd the whole of the foreign territory occupied by Russian armies ought to be evacuated. Nothing has been said of late as to their movements. The journals are nearly silent with regard to them. According to a paragraph which has reached me from Constantinople, so late as June 25th two regiments were still in East Roumelia. Whether the great body are there, or in Bulgaria, or concentrated between the Danube and the Pruth, if known at all, is only known to the Government.

My Lords, we should remember, here, the evacuation had

two stages, according to the 22nd Article in the Treaty of Berlin. The first stage was not completed at the period assigned for it. I cannot venture to repeat what has been said before in this House upon the subject, or go back to a controversy with which, perhaps, your Lordships are fatigued ; but the more it is examined the clearer it becomes that, at the end of nine months, East Roumelia and Bulgaria ought both to have been quitted. Such, I am convinced, was the original impression of the Government, as it appeared to be the language of their representatives and organs. A deficiency having occurred upon the first stage, not only suggests a deficiency upon the second, not only offers a temptation to it, not only raises a specious argument in favour of it—which it would be imprudent to exhibit—but really makes it harder to avoid it. If Russian troops had not remained beyond the legal time within the territory of the Sultan, the three months allotted as a margin would have more easily sufficed to march across Roumania, as the Treaty contemplated ; or, if that method was preferred, to gain Odessa from a port of embarkation. On the whole, then, there is little reason to anticipate the final exit on August 3rd, without new efforts to obtain it.

The Address which I submit, although no censure is involved in it, would be an effort of this kind. It would unavoidably sustain the efforts which the Government are making, or hasten those they are preparing. Had something of the kind been done in the middle of April, we should probably have now been in a different situation. But it would then have had the aspect of gratuitous, and thus of hostile, admonition. It is now dictated by experience of something which happened, and of something we regret.

My Lords, although I have not spoken very long, the whole case is now, in some degree, before your Lordships. Every one can see that the observance of the Treaty on August 3rd

after the damage it incurred on May 3rd, is *prima facie* improbable. But doubt may possibly arise as to the importance of delivering the territory, whether it is termed Roumania, or Moldavia and Wallachia, at the stipulated period. Men ask whether it is worth while to be tenacious, however justly, on the point, after the great events and hazards they appear to have surmounted? The answer is—that the war of 1854 was brought about by nothing but the occupation of the Danubian Principalities. When that occupation ceased peace might have been negotiated, although a separate attempt, a new departure, was resolved on. The alliance of France, Sardinia and Great Britain, the expedition which left our shores, the resolution to embark on war after an interval of forty years—these new and mighty elements of policy—had, as their immediate aim, to clear from Russian armies the Danubian Principalities; although, according to the Czar, those armies were not directed against the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, any more than the existing ones profess to be. Indeed, it is remarkable that on the day when Russia passed into Moldavia, in 1853, as Mr. Kinglake, the historian, has mentioned it, the four Powers, then acting together, sent out their protest to discountenance the movement. We have, therefore, their authority, with that of Lord Clarendon, Count Cavour, and Napoleon III.—who cannot be forgotten in this country—for maintaining that the occupation of the Danubian Principalities—whatever object is assigned to it, whatever mask it may assume—is not a state of things which Europe can assent to.

If it was dangerous in 1853, it is now far more so. At that time the line of the Danube was protected by considerable armies, with so great a commander as Omar Pasha to direct them. Beyond, there was a quadrilateral of fortresses, of which Silistria made itself immortal. An army of the present Czar, in the Danubian Principalities, has

nothing to intercept a march upon Sophia, unless it is a new Bulgarian militia, which his policy has organised.

Diplomatists and strategists would equally admit that the occupation of the region can less than ever be regarded with indifference. Indeed, we should remember that if it lasts a day beyond August 3rd a European war is justified. What justifies a war is not certain to produce a war ; but it involves a fatal bar to the tranquillity so requisite to every branch of industry and commerce at this moment.

My Lords, it is now worth while to reflect upon the many interests, the many recollections, which tend to a delay of the withdrawal, unless your Lordships counteract them. One ground of the reluctance to be reckoned on is connected with the position of Austria in Herzegovina and Bosnia. I leave the House to reason on the subject. To pass on, influence at Bucharest has long been assiduously cultivated at St. Petersburg. To sway the counsels of Tirnova or Sophia is a newer and, perhaps, a keener aspiration. To govern indirectly at Constantinople was an aim of Russia long before, and cannot be renounced when she has nearly been established in that capital.

These objects all suggest to her delay in the withdrawal. It is encouraged by the many triumphs over the rest of Europe her Government has recently obtained, whether in luring towards her Continental states which had formerly opposed her ; or in suspending wholly the resistance of this country to her efforts ; or in finding zealous partisans among the authors of the war in the Crimea ; or in proving the futility of treaties to restrain her from encroachment ; or in gaining at Berlin, twice over, nearly all that she was seeking ; or in reducing the balance of power to a collapse unparalleled in history.

Another strong consideration for the delay of the withdrawal arises from what is going on in South Africa. We

have there, apparently, a force as large as went out in 1854, however different may be the objects in their magnitude. We have there the military leader whom the public is most inclined to depend upon. We have there the passions and the energies which any other struggle would require; and there we seem to be exhausting all the spirit of the country.

Last of all, delay of the withdrawal is encouraged by the inevitable lassitude the Eastern Question has occasioned in the Legislature, after attention has been so long exclusively and painfully devoted to it.

If any other proof is wanted of the Russian disposition, the Treaty of San Stefano reveals it. The Treaty of San Stefano includes an occupation of a year beyond the length eventually conceded in the Treaty of Berlin. But the correspondence of this Session—which the notice has adverted to—is one continued illustration of the tendency to enlarge the Treaty of Berlin into the Treaty of San Stefano.

If thus, my Lords, the risk we have to deal with is established, an Address of the kind which I submit must prove at once that a large class in the United Kingdom—and not an unenlightened one—regard the matter with solicitude. Indeed, the very language of the noble Earl the First Lord of the Treasury, when he came back from Berlin, would be sufficient to defend it. At that time the noble Earl, according to the ordinary channels, stated, as the great political conclusion to which he had been led by so remarkable a Congress, that the language of Great Britain ought to be more distinct as regards the line of action she desires to promote upon the Continent.

No doubt the lesson has had many illustrations. Had her language been more distinct in 1853, it is notorious that the costly struggle which ensued might have been easily avoided. Had her language been more distinct in 1873, the

three Powers would have paused before advancing in their scheme against the independence of the Ottoman Empire. In 1877 the lesson was repeated. Had the language been more distinct some months ago, Russian troops might not have lingered after May 3rd in East Roumelia and Bulgaria. Unless it is now distinct, you have not any reason to assume that an occupation will be terminated as you wish, when there are keen and nearly irresistible temptations to prolong it. But still, it may be asked whether this House ought to declare itself.

My Lords, during five years the Eastern Question has perpetually occupied it. Numerous debates have taken place, and they have been initiated in a great diversity of quarters. Some noble lords have come forward as the special patrons of the races subject to the Porte, some as the converted and little-qualified adherents of St. Petersburg, some as the avowed supporters of what was done in 1856, so far as it was possible to guard it. But at no time in a drama so eventful has the House been permitted to exercise the influence over arrangements without which discussion seems to be a mere parade of knowledge and of argument. So far as my memory recalls it, in the whole transaction which has occupied us in so many of its phases, nothing has been brought about as yet, or been averted, by your Lordships. Neither as regards the vassal principalities, the Herzegovinian insurrection, the more momentous conflict which ensued, the settlement which followed it, has the voice of this House been fruitful or effective.

At length it may exert itself in such a way as to promote the deliverance of all the European Powers from a considerable peril. Had the Government succeeded in effecting the first departure at the proper time, there would be, of course, no ground of interference from your Lordships. As they did not succeed—however little we reproach them for it—such

interference is legitimate. It is the conclusion of experience ; it is the step of prudence : there is not any title to resent it. It would be a fitting close to the long, the agitating, but hitherto the unproductive toil your Lordships have devoted to the subject.

It may be asked, perhaps, still more particularly, in what manner the Address would tell on Russian counsels, should it be the pleasure of your Lordships to adopt it ? Looking to what is known of the interior, and what our meditation would suggest to us, there are probably two parties at St. Petersburg—one desirous to close, the other to extend the occupation. One would dwell on the recent discontent, not less alarming because deprived of any regular expression, the commotion which has taken place, and the transition which appears to be preparing, as a reason for bringing home the forces of the Empire. The other may refer, with greater accuracy than I have done to-night, to all the grounds of distant policy which are calculated to prolong the tenure we object to. Except upon particular occasions, divided judgment seems to be the chronic state of Governments and Empires.

The action of the House would clearly strengthen the Party who support the execution of the Treaty. It would throw weight into the scale, which at this moment may only want a little to establish the preponderance we aim at. By this view, also, an answer may be given to the only possible objection—namely, a reluctance to evince distrust in the governing authority of Russia. Reluctance to evince distrust when long experience creates it is not the most intelligible part of statesmanship and wisdom. But let this be forgotten. Let it be granted that on special grounds the governing authority of Russia is entitled to the deepest consideration of the Legislature. But if the Sovereign of Russia is forced to oscillate between two sets of contradictory advisers,

to uphold the more enlightened is thoroughly in accord with the imagined obligation. It is a boon, because it tends to shorten painful indecision. It is a boon, because it tends to bring about the choice of safety and of honour.

It is a favourite topic in some quarters that for many errors into which Russian policy is drawn the ruling power is not to be considered as accountable. The noble Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (the Marquess of Salisbury) not long ago explained that much of what we are accustomed to protest against arises in that country, because no Department is acquainted with the conduct of another. It has been often pointed out that military leaders distinctly arrogate a power independent of the Government they theoretically act under. Distrust of Russian policy is not, therefore, distrust of the legitimate authority, but of something undefined, of something dark, of something surreptitious, which that authority is not sufficient to contend with and to master. But if, upon the other hand, men do hold the governing authority responsible for all that has been done from the Crimean war down to this moment, they certainly are not required to withhold any step which is calculated to enforce the Treaty of Berlin and to release the territory occupied, because it may not be acceptable at St. Petersburg. The noble Marquess may point out that movements have taken place which insure the retreat by August 3rd, although they have been studiously concealed from us. He will not probably recur to the position that treaties are mechanically sure to execute themselves ; that their spontaneous force in the discharge of obligations may be thoroughly relied on ; that they do not want the slightest vigilance to guard them. Prepared to listen to anything by which it may be shown that such a course is not essential to its object, I move the Address of which I have given notice.

After the debate,

Lord Campbell, in reply, said that no importance ought to be attached to the contemptuous manner in which the noble Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was equally disposed to treat his friends and his opponents. The noble Marquess had at first attributed to him (Lord Campbell) remorse; but, in point of fact, the self-reproach which the noble Marquess had incurred for too easy acquiescence in the first departure from the 22nd Article could alone explain the uncalled-for acrimony he had introduced into the discussion. The confidence of the noble Marquess in the opinion that the Russian army would pass over the Pruth by August 3rd did not seem to be greatly backed by the admission that it had not yet entered the territory of Roumania. But no one was so much interested in the final execution of the Article as the noble Marquess. While he declared himself convinced that the Address proposed would not conduce to that result, the House would naturally be unwilling to adopt it. If the retreat by August 3rd took place, the debate would have promoted it; if it did not, the responsibility of the Government would be much enhanced by the proceedings of that evening.

August 8th, 1879.

TREATY OF BERLIN—THE RUSSIAN EVACUATION OF ROUMELIA AND BULGARIA.

QUESTION.—OBSERVATIONS.

MY LORDS,—The question which I have to put compels me, for a moment, to advert to such official declarations as have taken place, one in the House, one out of it, upon the subject. About a week ago the noble Marquess the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informed your Lordships that East Roumelia was no longer occupied by any Russian army. Considering how long ago it should have been released, the statement was not at all astonishing. As to the remainder of the occupation, whether it had ceased or when it was about to do so, no light was furnished at that moment. But that was not the last expression of the Government. On Wednesday, according to the public journals, the noble Earl the Prime Minister assured the Lord Mayor that no Russian soldier continued in the dominion of the Sultan. But as a large mass of persons would hardly know whether or not Bulgaria can be included in the dominion of the Sultan, a further and a less ambiguous statement is required to make it clear that the new vassal principality has passed beyond its former military tutelage. The Prime Minister may have only corroborated what fell from the Secretary of State, or may have added to it. Either interpretation might suggest itself.

But there is another point to be attended to. It was distinctly contemplated in the 22nd Article of the Treaty

of Berlin that the Russian troops should spend three months in traversing Roumania. The permission may not have been utilised: a different route may have been chosen. It is therefore indispensable to ask, whether any force is now between the Danube and the Pruth? In short, until we know whether by August 3rd the Russians had quitted all the territory occupied under the Treaty of Berlin, and not only a part of it, it is not possible to form a judgment on the prospects of the Eastern Question, or on the attitude of Russia to other European Powers, or on the mode in which the foreign policy of the Government has been conducted. The question, therefore, will be seen by the House, whatever answer it elicits, to be required by the circumstances in which we find ourselves at present.

June 17th, 1880.

TURKEY—THE OTTOMAN ASSEMBLIES.

MOTION FOR THE INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. GOSCHEN.

MY LORDS,—It may be useful to enumerate the circumstances which seem to justify the Notice I have given, to call attention to the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies in connection with the Special Embassy to Constantinople; and to move an humble Address to Her Majesty that a copy of the instructions to Mr. Goschen be laid upon the table. Although a few days ago the present aspect of the Eastern Question was rather copiously discussed by members of the House well qualified to handle it, not one alluded to this important chapter of the subject. If a stranger had come into the House and listened with avidity, as I did, to so many competent instructors, he would not have discovered that these Assemblies had existed, or that a grave event had dropped a curtain on their action. The answer of the noble Earl the Leader of the House, towards the end of May, as it appeared to me, was little calculated to assure the House that the Special Embassy had been directed to revive them.

In the meantime two of the most recent and distinguished travellers from Constantinople—Sir William Gregory and Mr. Lawrence Oliphant—have borne witness in the public journals to the necessity of that line which I should urge your Lordships to insist upon. The language of Sir William Gregory is more remarkable on this account. He was known in the House of Commons, not only as among the first of Irish debaters, but as a special patron of the nonconforming races

in the Ottoman Dominion. In this very letter, while he deprecates undue hostility to Russia, he maintains that these political Assemblies ought to be revived, however much that Power may oppose the consummation. On both points the expressions of Mr. Lawrence Oliphant are almost identical in substance.

My Lords, it might be a remedy to some misapprehensions to bring before the House a short narrative of the mode in which the Ottoman Assemblies were established, and of the destiny they suffered. If my version is erroneous, the noble Lords who spoke the other night may contradict it or correct it. Although no statement is more reckless than a statement too familiar in the House, that since the Crimean war there had been no improvement in the Ottoman Administration, it is certain that great abuses existed under Abdul Aziz, of which Christians and Mahometans were equally the victims.

In 1875 Constantinople wore a melancholy aspect, which might recall the darkest sketches of St. Simon or of Tacitus, when they unfold the daily march of arbitrary power. Even before that time, among the first men of the Sublime Porte there was a firm conclusion that Assemblies of some kind were indispensable. Not only Midhat Pasha, well known to your Lordships from his exile in this country, but Khalil Cherif, once Ambassador at Paris, and nephew of the former Khedive, Hussein Avni, who was afterwards assassinated, and others I might mention, were impatient for this object.

In the spring of 1876 the movement of the Softas brought about the downfall of the Grand Vizier and the deposition of the Sultan. Arbitrary rule was overcome decidedly and bloodlessly. From that moment some kind of constitution was inevitable. Large masses do not enter into union and expose their lives to hazard merely to change the person of the despot and put another individual at the head of the

system they conspired to overthrow, after a long struggle with fear, with indolence, with loyalty, which must oppose themselves to such an enterprise. From that moment, therefore, some kind of constitution was in embryo. There was nothing very tardy in the parturition. The Sultan Abdul Aziz fell in the summer of 1876. At the close of that year the new Assemblies were established. In the early months of 1877 their vigour was demonstrated. It only remains to see in what manner they were doomed to perish.

When the Sublime Porte had gone through this remarkable transition, it is quite true that they were not prepared to acquiesce in the decisions of the Conference which General Ignatieff seemed to have originated. Their objections were elaborately, as many think unanswerably stated. No rejoinder followed. A Russian army crossed the Pruth in April 1877, avowedly to enforce the propositions which the Conference had settled. When that army reached San Stefano, at the end of 1877, the Ottoman Assemblies were deliberating. They were closed by military fiat, and have never since been opened. A retrospect of this kind is the only mode of dealing with the fallacy that these institutions were extemporised for nothing except to parry the legitimate demand of virtuous negotiators.

My Lords, it may now be proper to remark upon the objects which demand a revival of the Assemblies overthrown either in a form identic or amended. Although far from the gravest point, the question of the Greek Frontier bears upon the subject. The Sultan is placed in a dilemma, from which nothing but a co-ordinate Assembly can release him. The demand which certain Powers have addressed, or are preparing to address to him is one to which no arbitrary sovereign can lend himself. He is asked to give up territory for which he is accountable to 30,000,000 subjects, to Mahometan opinion, to succeeding generations. He is not asked to give

it up as a mode of solving any European difficulty. He cannot guard his conscience by the principle of making sacrifices for the general tranquillity of nations.

The aggrandisement of Greece may be a benefit to Greece ; it may be even a benefit to Thessaly, or any region to be possibly annexed to the Hellenic kingdom ; but it involves no gain of any kind to Europe. The Sultan, therefore, cannot venture to initiate the course demanded of him. A Parliament, if it existed, might canvass it, and possibly indorse it. The responsibility would be diluted. The head of the State would no longer find himself in the almost iniquitous dilemma of being forced to alienate exacting Powers, or else to place his throne and life in jeopardy that he may satisfy and humour them.

But there is something to which the House may perhaps attach more weight than the Greek Frontier. That question is not so grave as it appears, since, although it tends to rupture between the States concerned, the war may be averted by the greater forces on which either is dependent. All enlightened statesmen must be anxious to retard the disintegrating movement in the territory of the Sultan, until they have arrived at novel combinations, which it is harder now than it has been at any former period to realise. We see the growth of that disintegrating movement in Albania. We see it on the Balkans. A Parliament in which every race may find a voice, and every discontent the opportunity of utterance, tends a good deal to the cohesion of an Empire so distracted. In Austria it has eminently been a manner of facilitating union. So much is it the case, that those regions which at given moments have effected separation—such as Bohemia and Galicia—have been inclined to avoid it and withdraw their Representatives. To establish at Constantinople a body privileged to speak upon and remedy disorders is an obvious method of assuaging the propensity to fly in

all directions from the centre, which may surprise the world into hostilities.

But, if we may judge from what took place on Friday last, the same conclusion may be based upon a ground more interesting to your Lordships. The whole atmosphere of Western Europe is charged with the idea that certain Ottoman reforms are indispensable. Before 1877 the condition of the Empire was alarming. It is now materially graver. Taxation has become more necessary to impose—more difficult to levy. Large armies are unpaid, and thus reduced to the necessity of brigandage. Around Constantinople discipline can hardly be maintained in the interior of barracks. The inhabitants of Pera, where all the European Embassies are placed, appear to be unable to leave their houses after nightfall. The houses themselves are an imperfect refuge from the violence the war has left behind to prey upon the capital. So much may be inferred from local correspondence. Our own Blue-books are full of gloomy pictures, both in Europe and in Asia. It is seen that the new organisation of East Roumelia has been utterly disastrous. The oppression to which Mahometans are now exposed, without the slightest provocation, surpasses the atrocities which led to so much ferment in this country, but which at least were traced to insurrectionary movement. In Armenia no form of discontent or misgovernment is wanting. The functions of Baker Pasha and the *gendarmerie* are unhappily suspended. On all these subjects, Major Trotter, Consul Mitchell, Vice-Consul Biliotti, are authoritative witnesses. Their evidence is crowned to-day by a despatch from Sir Henry Layard, of April 27th, which must be known already to considerable numbers. The result is, that Great Britain is impelled to use the language of remonstrance. In a despatch of May 6th, which your Lordships may have also seen to-day, the Foreign Office have employed it. Such language, however just, however good in

its intention, is entirely inadequate. We did not act as a defending, and have, therefore, little weight as an admonitory Power, as it is only through defence that we have any title to admonish. Besides, as it appears to me, although the question may admit of being debated, you can only act on distant provinces by acting on Constantinople. It is scarcely possible to form enlightened institutions at Bagdad and leave unchecked venality at Stamboul. The only method is to limit arbitrary power, and with it arbitrary outlay. No doubt the same conclusion may be based on larger and more speculative arguments. But the language of Sir Henry Layard, which the House has seen this morning, is so authoritative in favour of this measure, that I will not pursue the subject as I might have done. It might only weaken the impression he has made upon your Lordships.

At the same time it may be necessary to offer some reply to the objection pertinaciously resorted to and founded upon one despatch of the noble Marquess who presided lately at the Foreign Office (the Marquess of Salisbury). A few weeks ago, in answer to a question, the noble Earl the Secretary of State (Earl Granville) thought proper to revive it. I once had occasion to remark that the despatch may be interpreted in a different way from that which has been usual. It would be easy to contend that, in the light of subsequent events, it may be wholly disregarded. The despatch is founded on conjecture, and could not have another basis, as it was written before the Assemblies had begun to operate. But the conjectures of the greatest minds are not an answer to experience and trial. The noble Marquess reasoned *a priori*. He could do nothing else. Sir Henry Layard, a short time after, reasoned upon evidence, and reasoning on evidence, pronounced in favour of the system the noble Marquess is supposed to have disparaged. How is it that the noble Lords, who bow so readily to the impressions of the noble Marquess on what

he did not see at work, defy the language of Sir Henry Layard, who was able to remark its tendency and character, and who in several despatches of 1877 became a witness of its benefit? It is not a question between two rival critics, which might be an invidious one: it is a question between the previous estimate of one mind and the actual observation of another.

But Sir Henry Layard was not alone in his conclusion. The Greek Patriarch endorsed it. After the Assemblies had been sitting, and when Russia crossed the Pruth, the Greek Patriarch diffused a solemn manifesto—it is in our Blue-books—to protest against the march of the invader, to vindicate the Sultan, and to proclaim his strong appreciation of the charter which had recently been granted. It is no reproach to the noble Marquess if his speculative judgment is outweighed by the experimental verdict of the Ambassador and Patriarch together. Indeed, the criticism of the noble Marquess may have been thoroughly well founded, so far as it is showed that the new Assemblies would require a modifying process. All constitutions are uncertain at their outset. The world, it would appear, is more successful in mechanical discovery than in political contrivance. The Parliament of Great Britain had to go through various developments, and was not matured by Simon de Montfort, who is popularly mentioned as its founder. The Prussian Chambers were erected on the basis of a provincial system, which had been the only check upon monarchical ascendancy. Austria, emerging from an arbitrary Government so recently as 1848, has gone through several organic changes before the present system was arrived at.

According to the ordinary estimate, France has gone through fourteen constitutions between 1879 and that of M. Wallon, which is still enduring. Besides, although under the direction of Lord Palmerston, who was the author of that policy, Great

Britain has advanced and multiplied Assemblies in the world, she has never yet presumed to dictate their form, to organise their attributes, or regulate the manner of electing them. Her aim has been confined to the encouragement of institutions by which arbitrary power would be limited and Ministerial responsibility created. It is now beyond all question that the Chambers initiated by the Sultan were tending to these desirable results.

It remains, however, to consider by what line of action the Assemblies can be set up again. It seems to me that Sir William Gregory and Mr. Lawrence Oliphant are justified in their impression that it is impossible for Russia to favour a revival of the system she has lately overthrown and previously discouraged. It would militate against her influence upon the Bosphorus. It would endanger the stability of the despotic *régime* she adheres to in her territory. It would render nugatory, to a great extent, the waste of armies and expenditure of millions, to say nothing of the formidable hazards by which the process was accompanied.

It follows, that a Prime Minister who hugs himself in the idea—however conscientiously—of a European concert, in which Russia would preponderate, as an agency for dealing with the clouds and problems of the East, can hardly take a step towards the consummation I have pointed to. He is himself the obstacle to such a consummation being arrived at. It is partly upon that account I do not ask the House to adopt a Resolution in favour of the measure I have touched upon; but, with a view to make the situation more intelligible, and thus to guide ulterior proceedings, shall move an humble Address to Her Majesty that the Instructions of Mr. Goschen be laid upon the Table.

July 8th, 1880.

RUSSIA AND THE PORTE—MR. GLADSTONE'S SPEECHES.

MOTION FOR A PAPER.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising, according to notice, to call the attention of the House to the speeches delivered by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, respectively at Hawarden on Tuesday, January 16th, at Frome on Monday, January 22nd, at Taunton on Saturday, January 27th, 1877; and to move for a return of the number of killed and wounded in the late war between Russia and the Porte, said:—

My Lords,—Before going on further with this Notice, I should wish to guard myself by mentioning that a precedent exists for advertiring in this House to some events in the career of a Prime Minister who happens to be sitting in the other. It occurred in 1827, as regards Mr. Canning. The authority on whom the precedent depends is much too high, indeed, for any one to emulate, at least, who sits upon these benches. But it is not less conclusive upon that account, as regards what falls within the rules and usages of Parliament. If no precedent existed, an unusual course might be admitted in an unexampled situation.

My Lords, events are so rapidly forgotten when some new conflict which appeals to Parliamentary opinion has arisen, or when new forms of legislation are before us, that events, however recent, startling and familiar, may escape the apprehension which they call for. When, in March and April,

the General Election overthrew the Government appealing to it, the leaders of the Opposition at that time in the two Houses might have been expected to replace it according to the practice generally followed, unless some one else was called upon by the Sovereign before them. Although no one else was called on by the Sovereign before them, they were not destined to replace it. A distinguished individual, who had openly and systematically renounced all intention of coming back to office, and acted in a manner little suited to any other prospect, was suddenly precipitated into Downing Street. The return from Elba was not more contradictory or violent.

But that was not the limit of the wonder. Although Ministerial explanations in the two Houses of Parliament have attended nearly every crisis we have gone through during the last twenty or thirty years, none of any sort were given in the debates on the Address, either by the new Prime Minister or those who had submitted to his movement. It seemed to be assumed that the perpetual and inherent order of the British Constitution secured the post of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer to a person who had formally withdrawn from the Leadership of the Party which had gained success, and which was thus required to organise a Government.

Under these circumstances those who, before the usurpation happened, pledged themselves to the opinion that it would be a national reproach and national calamity, may be expected, while the Session is going on, to take whatever course appears to them to have even a distant tendency to shorten it.

It will be easy to explain on what grounds the speeches mentioned in the notice are more properly an object of remark than others more habitually referred to at this moment. The others more habitually referred to were delivered by a candidate. Whoever finds himself in that position

must speak, whether he likes it or not, and is not, therefore, a free agent. If what he says is full of much inaccuracy and extravagance, he may remark that it was only meant for the electors, and passed without his wish or sanction to the general community. Even if his language alienates crowned heads and puts Ambassadors in difficulty, he may insist that it was the only manner of working on some two hundred minds of a peculiar cast essential to his victory. There is no such plea for speeches which can have had no aim restricted to the audience who were present. The case becomes much stronger when these speeches are delivered a few weeks before Parliament assembles; when a legitimate arena is on the point of being reopened; when it is most unusual for an influential person or former statesman to be seen on the platform; when he can have no aim except to move the public or inflame it; and, apparently, by language he desires to screen from the criticism of the Legislature. So much consideration is due, however, to the absent, that it might be unjust to advert even to these speeches, however little sheltered by their origin, unless you traced the line of conduct which their author had pursued on the transaction they refer to.

A few words, however, would suffice for such a purpose, which many noble Lords, if they are inaccurate, can rectify. It seems to me to be accepted among the best observers of diplomacy that the present Prime Minister's own conduct in 1870 did much to revive the dangers of the Eastern Question.

However that may be, in 1874 they certainly appeared, in the shape of an alliance between three well-known Powers, highly menacing to the results which the Crimean war had laboured in gloom, not unrelieved by splendour, to establish. There was not an effort upon his part to check or to discourage that alliance, although it worked under a banner against which Liberal opinion, by long tradition, had arrayed

itself. Those who did determine to oppose it met with every species of embarrassment which he, or his immediate friends, were capable of offering. I can prove that, much too circumstantially, to any one who questions me. At last, in two years, he came forward, not to breathe a whisper against that formidable system, but to inflame the world against the Empire which it tended to disorganise. It is true that Empire, on many grounds, deserved to be reproached. But the British public were already too much inclined to look with passion on its errors. An incendiary appeared when a fireman was wanted.

His next effort was to form a party, who would act as the supporters and accomplices of Russia, in defiance of all the lessons which history had originated and foreign policy had settled. It led to some results which are not properly appreciated, besides the obvious one of lending aid where much resistance was demanded. To form a Russian party is a certain manner of eliciting an anti-Russian party in the country. The upshot is, that even with that State our relations are embittered by the conduct which professes to improve them. The proposition of confiding in and co-operating with a quarter there have been so many reasons for interpreting as adverse to our objects, brings down the weapons which had gone into disuse, and kindles animosity which slumbered.

Such a pamphlet as that of Mr. Austin, which presented in a burning form the course of an aggressive Power against all the States it had attacked, would never have existed unless the right hon. gentleman had rashly held up the aggressive Power as an object of our sympathy. His step was misleading to Great Britain, unjust to Europe, and discrediting to Russia.

We have now reached the speeches of January 1877. The charge against them is, that they were fraught with arguments

to bring on the invasion which quickly followed their delivery. It is not my intention to give many extracts, because their tenor may be seized without a process so invidious ; and because we only have reporters for their language, although, in such a case, they are pretty certain to be accurate. They consist of unlimited denunciation of everything to be found within the territory of the Sultan ; invective against the Treaties of 1856 ; and then, to crown the whole, an anathema against the Ottoman Assemblies, which are described as “an imposture, or something worse than an imposture.”

Now, my Lords, by far the strongest barrier to the invasion consisted in the Ottoman Assemblies, which were sitting at that moment. While a reforming body was at work against abuses—and seen by all the world to be so—it required no ordinary stretch of humanitarian pretension in any foreign army to interfere with their proceedings and anticipate their labours. If they could not be suppressed (and the right hon. gentleman had no power to suppress them), to blacken them, which fell within the range of his unscrupulous activity, was the very course required by the invader. The invader thoroughly commended it. But these speeches had a further influence. They led the Czar to think that he might count on the party which initiated the war of 1854 as his supporters in the very enterprise which they had formerly defeated. It is now better known to what extent the Councils at St. Petersburg were balanced. We see to which scale an overwhelming weight was added. The war began.

The next step of the right hon. gentleman, in defiance of the political connection he had just been leading, was to engage the House of Commons by Resolutions, if he could, to uphold and sanction the aggression. His defeat, indeed, was signal. He but unmasked the aim with which the speeches I refer to had been uttered. When Russian forces reached San Stefano, he was not disposed to sanction any measure for

counteracting or retarding them. The fleet hung back under his auspices. Unless in a sinister moment he had resolved to force himself into power, when he might well rejoice in the attainment of impunity, not a word of retrospective blame would fall upon him from any Member of the Legislature. His own irregular ambition forces it upon us. It is only by reviving circumstances which might have passed into oblivion, that our present risks can be appreciated. It ought to be remembered, therefore, that when the fate of Constantinople trembled, when every object gained by the Crimean war was threatened with extinction, when the Ottoman Assemblies were dispersed, when the Grand Duke was endeavouring to force his body-guard upon the Sultan, when Russia might at any moment have been mistress of the Dardanelles, when Parliament was agitated night by night upon the subject, the right hon. gentleman was so distinctly seen to have promoted this unhappy situation that his house and life were in considerable jeopardy.

In this extraordinary juncture there was nothing to deceive the masses who assailed him. Their vehemence was founded on their knowledge. They were inflamed because they were enlightened. They saw the peril of Constantinople to involve humiliation of their country. They knew the right hon. gentleman to be the author of the one and of the other. Reflection of this kind on what occurred two years ago would be, no doubt, uncalled for and objectionable, unless I was enabled at once to point to its connection with the difficulties which surround us. Let it be granted that every idea of retribution or of justice should be thrown out in estimating or in contemplating Ministers. Let it be granted that utility or prudence is the only rule in their selection.

The Marquess of Huntly rose to Order. He saw nothing whatever in the Motion that bore on the condition of the

East. The noble Lord was moving for a Return of the killed and wounded in the war between Russia and Turkey.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell: If the noble Lord will listen to my observations, he will find they have a direct bearing on the Motion. The course which I have traced, the speeches I advert to, are the immediate source of the effects which now embarrass and endanger. Russia is encouraged in every form of restless aspiration by the conviction—it may be pushed too far—that she has in Downing Street a firm ally to be depended on. The condition of Armenia—well known to the House—suggests a pretext for advancing from the recent acquisitions, Kars and Batoum, to the Gulf of Scanderoon. In this way the Mediterranean is commanded, and results arise almost equivalent to those the tenure of Constantinople would occasion.

It is not easy for the most industrious thinkers upon Eastern policy to invent a barrier to any such encroachment. The reform of local institutions would, of course, annihilate its pretext. But it is in vain to take away the pretext when you offer the temptation which resides in the official power of the right hon. gentleman. By that circumstance the elements which form the chronic hazard of the Ottoman Dominion have gained an impulse never previously communicated.

Greece is led to think that she may enter on aggression with connivance. The Prince of Montenegro knows that he will win the favour of Great Britain by the very conduct which she formerly retarded. The Prince of Bulgaria has learnt, without the forms of a despatch, that he may now, with little prospect of rebuke, encourage Russian officers who flood over his territory, or sow disorder from the Balkans to Adrianople, or claim the independence which the other vassals have arrived at, or enter into any other controversy with the Sultan. Austria and Germany, having recently withdrawn

from the embrace of Russia, are convinced by the language I have pointed to, that the sooner they return to it the more Great Britain will applaud them.

If Mr. Goschen is instructed to demand the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies—which he is in a subordinate despatch—the Russian Embassy, who must oppose it to the utmost, have only to explain to the Sultan—his ear may be too open to the counsel—that the Leader of the British Cabinet has held them up to execration ; that his real opinion was declared in 1877 ; that the conversion is as simulated as the anathema was final.

Until some change occurs it is difficult to see in what manner the least advance to safety in these questions can be hoped for. It may be said that these remarks, however just, are useless for their purpose. It is not, indeed, within the range of facts or arguments to modify a Government. But facts and arguments are not entirely thrown away, if many groups are seen to have a just dissatisfaction with something recently and unexpectedly forced upon them. I need not touch on those who have been faithful to the opinions of the late Lord Palmerston, by which, in 1856, our policy was guided. They cannot have a stronger duty than to close the usurpation which weighs upon them at this moment, and which of all men Lord Palmerston would have most strenuously resisted. But many noble lords who sit upon the Treasury Bench are equally entitled to regret it, since it identifies them with language which they never held, with conduct which they may have frequently, however ineffectually, deprecated. But it exposes to far more manifest injustice the Government which terminated at the General Election. To what arraignment were they open ? It was that they had feebly contended with the new Holy Alliance. The right hon. gentleman never once aspired to resist it. It was that they had insufficiently restrained, or not succeeded

in averting, the hostilities which followed. The right hon. gentleman did his utmost to precipitate them. It was, again, that they allowed the Treaties of 1856 to languish in abeyance. The right hon. gentleman had defied them altogether. It was, again, that at Berlin they sanctioned perilous concessions. The right hon. gentleman would have sent them to the Congress without a tithe of the inadequate authority they exercised. If the verdict of the General Election against the late Government was just—as I maintain, having endeavoured to promote it—it has led to a conclusion utterly untenable as well as fraught with inconveniences to Europe and perils to Great Britain.

The present moment seems to me to be well chosen for a notice of this kind, because two objects had to be considered. One was to allow the effervescence of Midlothian to pass over, the other to prevent society from being too long habituated to the Government in the form which it has assumed, and also to prevent complete oblivion of the facts which show that form to be much more than inadmissible. A task so painful ought to be as long as possible delayed. But, in a short time, the lassitude of Parliament commences. The moment it sets in everything seems more tolerable than exertion to correct it. If no sort of protest is initiated before that time arrives, we may be led to accede to the present state of things as a stroke of fate, or an incurable disorder. Some noble lords who share these views may urge that a Motion against the actual formation of the Government would have been a more legitimate proceeding. But there were several objections to it. If carried in this House, it might be counterbalanced in the other. It would involve debate and controversy with the noble Lord upon the Treasury Bench, which I am far from wishing to encounter. As it is, they are not bound to justify the right hon. gentleman or acquiesce in the opinions I have stated.

The Motion, I submit, may be accepted without a judgment one way or the other. It is for a return which two Embassies can furnish, which has much historical importance at this moment, and which, when it is borne in mind how much the right hon. gentleman was the promoter of the recent war, enables us to trace at least a portion of his great responsibility. The course I have pursued involves considerable hazard, because in this House the right hon. gentleman can look to prelates he has nominated, peers he has created, men in office he has chosen. It seems to me, however, to be a law which runs through history, that, unless some one is prepared to sacrifice himself, usurped dominion and irregular authority, however fatal, cannot easily be limited. On what grounds their limitation is required in the present instance need not further be insisted on. It is the first step to that repose on Eastern matters to which, after its long fatigues, the country is entitled.

The noble Lord concluded by moving for the Return of which he had given notice.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell, in reply, said that it was satisfactory to find that the noble Earl the Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville) had not much to say against the notice, except that it ought to have come on ten days sooner than it had done. He (Lord Stratheden and Campbell) had hardly hoped for such a tribute to its necessity. If he had adverted to speeches delivered so long ago as 1877, it had been sufficiently explained for what public object he had done so. The Return might be obtained at once by communicating with the Ottoman and Russian Embassies in London. But if the noble Earl objected to such a burden, as too much enhancing those his foreign policy occasioned, he would not divide the House, as the Return was not essential to the purpose he had aimed at.

March 17th, 1881.

TURKEY AND GREECE—THE FRONTIER QUESTION.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to Correspondence on the Greek Frontier, and to move an Address to the Crown for copies of the remaining Despatches from the French Government on the differences between Greece and the Ottoman Empire, said : My Lords, the notice I have given arises partly from some discussions which occurred in August last, when many of the House were naturally absent. It is twofold, as it proposes to call attention to correspondence we possess on the Greek Frontier, and to move for several despatches of the French Government which are withheld from us. As regards the first portion of the notice, the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs having intimated to me a great reluctance to discuss it while negotiations are proceeding, I shall not touch upon it. But, as regards the despatches of the French Government, without detaining the House at length, their position may be stated. They have been collected from the French Official Book in the *Mémorial Diplomatique* of January 29th. Three of them have been presented to the Legislature, while thirteen are absent. [The noble Lord gave the dates of those which had appeared, and those which he thought the House ought to require the production of.]

My Lords, the tendency of these despatches as a whole is to give the true interpretation of the Conference at Berlin.

They are an elaborate reply to current fallacies by which the peace of Europe is endangered. They point out, with a lucidity which ought to be acknowledged, and greater eloquence than seems to be required in compositions of the kind, or than is generally found in them, that the Conference was only framed for mediating purposes ; that mediation and arbitration are not to be confounded with each other ; that mediation implies free choice in the two States, which differ as to whether they will act upon the counsel of the mediator.

In exact proportion as the European body is familiarised with the arguments of M. St. Hilaire, war between Greece and the Porte is hindered and discouraged. The inconveniences of such a war will hardly be disputed by your Lordships. It must throw back Greece, financially at least, for a considerable period. It must occasion loss of treasure to the other, and perhaps the more impoverished belligerent. It would be calculated to inflame the latent elements of discord between the Danube and the Bosphorus. It might re-establish in European Turkey the hostile occupation, which did not willingly or hastily abandon it.

Now, there is not any technical objection to the complete production of these documents. The principle is granted. You may give all if you give any. They cannot possibly impede negotiations. On the contrary, their influence in tranquillising Greece must be augmented by the echo they receive and by the number of political societies through which they vibrate to its councils. Nor ought the course which I am taking to be embarrassing to the Government, since they may accede without debate, if they think proper, to the Motion. As far as I can judge, after devoting much attention to the whole of the French despatches, there is nothing to place the three to which we are confined in a different or a safer category from those which I now move for.

April 8th, 1881.

TURKEY—SIR A. H. LAYARD, LATE H.M.
AMBASSADOR AT THE PORTE.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the recent correspondence upon Turkey, and to move for the despatches which explain the withdrawal of Sir Henry Layard from the Embassy of Constantinople, said :—

My Lords,—The Notice I have to bring on to-night relates chiefly to the Foreign Policy of Her Majesty's Government, of which much appears in the correspondence I refer to. It has been deferred during the absence of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville). But it is not so much directed against him as might possibly be imagined. We are too much inclined, in ordinary language, to connect the Secretary of State exclusively with everything which occurs in foreign policy, as if he were an autocrat who swayed it. It is forgotten to how many other forces he may be possibly accountable. It might, indeed, be easily perceived by referring to a volume which a Member of this House has recently produced—the diary of the late Lord Ellenborough. It is there seen how little influence on foreign policy even so eminent and gifted a Secretary of State as Lord Dudley usually exerted. In one capital of Europe, at this moment, the whole diplomatic world would laugh at the idea of the Secretary of State having any great responsibility for the affairs of his Department.

My Lords, the Blue-books relate to a variety of subjects—Ottoman finance, the Montenegrin frontier, and the condition

of Eastern Roumelia—from which important lessons are derivable. On the condition of Eastern Roumelia it is important for any one to see what Colonel Wilson has written in No. 19 of 1880, page 139. But the only despatch I need refer to more particularly is that which bears more directly on the Motion. It is No. 7 of 1880, page 8. It is a despatch from Lord Granville to Sir Henry Layard, expressing the greatest satisfaction with his conduct, notifying that leave of absence has been granted to him, and that Mr. Goschen has been appointed on a special mission. None of the Blue-books explain his final disappearance. None of them point out in what manner the original intention, as announced by the despatch which is before us, was abandoned. On my part there is no prejudice against Mr. Goschen, whose financial services in Egypt, in common with many persons, I appreciate. I happen to have no acquaintance with Sir Henry Layard, who, as regards this proceeding, is entirely irresponsible. He is the only one in a long series who have held his recent post, from Lord Stratford de Redcliffe downwards, to whom I have not had the opportunity of listening upon the Eastern Question.

Now, on these grounds, the recall of Sir Henry Layard, against the positive design the Government had indicated, seemed to be impolitic. His particular connection with the East as an explorer, or discoverer of Nineveh, is too well known to be stated. Having been sent out as Ambassador just before the war of 1877, he was in full possession of the labyrinth which followed it. If he was not actively engaged in reviving the Ottoman Assemblies—a point the Government professed to aim at—he watched their infancy, he had proclaimed their importance, and when the Russian army reached San Stefano he had been a witness of their downfall. He had considerable access to the palace and the Sultan. In other capitals the functions of Ambassadors may be restricted

to persuasion; in Constantinople it must be frequently extended to direction. Direction is impossible without experience and knowledge, together with the tact, assurance, or at least authority, which spring from them. It has become a maxim at Constantinople, which I have often heard there, that until he is acclimatised to its intrigues and passions by a residence of months, the best diplomatist is scarcely capable of acting.

Sir Henry Layard is withdrawn, not to make way for any one whose past experience or local knowledge might prepare him; but for a Member of the Legislature beyond the sphere of the profession, who must have found himself a novice in the capital which he approached, and who, therefore, needed a preparatory interval, although immediate action was required of him.

An arrangement of the kind can hardly be defended, unless its consequences have been fortunate. It seems to me to have been followed by a series of errors of which one may be adverted to at present. The principle has been habitually laid down by Her Majesty's Government that we ought to insist on the Treaty of Berlin, in all its parts, being faithfully and literally executed. The principle, although a specious one, before we acquiesce in it, requires much consideration.

In the first place, the Treaty of Berlin was unavoidably connected with, and emanated from, the victories of Russia. It contained many things which the other European Powers, had they stood as they did in 1856, would never have admitted. It cannot, therefore, be urged that its total and immediate execution was an object of Great Britain. But while the Treaty of Berlin contained much which Russia valued or exulted in, it contained a good deal she reluctantly assented to.

A Government which constantly insisted on the execution of the Treaty found itself in the anomalous position of acting

with Russia and against her simultaneously. The only escape was to aim merely at the execution of the Articles with which Russia found herself identified, or merely at the execution of the Articles by which her progress was in some degree restricted. The former course appears to have been chosen, as regards the whole transaction of the Montenegrin Frontier. No Power but Russia had the slightest interest in the aggrandisement of Montenegro, which had long been virtually dependent on her. It was brought about, however, by a naval demonstration which involved considerable hazard, and in spite of Albanian resistance which threw considerable doubt upon its policy and justice.

The Conference at Berlin is much harder to defend, however, than the naval demonstration. In the course of the Session the Prime Minister is stated to have offered an extraordinary plea for it. It is that he only followed the French initiative in joining it. Since 1870, on grounds too numerous to mention, the French initiative has not been altogether the directing force which any prudent guide of foreign policy would look to. A Minister who openly declares that, on a subject of that kind, he is controlled by the initiative of France, has said a harder thing against himself than he is likely from any other quarter to encounter.

The result of the Berlin Conference has been to implant in the Athenian Government the absolute delusion that they possess a legal title to a territorial concession without exchange or purchase or any other form of sacrifice to win it. That is an absolute delusion the French Secretary of State himself has laboured to exhibit in a series of despatches I recently adverted to, which it would well become the Foreign Office fully to produce, as they may all be copied from the French official volume.

But, although it is an absolute delusion, the King of Greece, in his Royal Speech to Parliament, was led by his advisers to

endorse it ; the Prime Minister of Greece habitually endorses it ; it forms the basis of Athenian manifestoes ; it has forced the mediating Powers into the most open contradiction as regards the many frontiers they have traced, the various opinions they have sanctioned.

My Lords, although it is an absolute delusion, it is much to be feared that the Government have patronised it, or, if they have not patronised it, done nothing to rebuke it, and left to France the undivided labour of contending with it. If, indeed, the Berlin Conference had been the means of drawing Germany towards us, the result might have atoned for many inconveniences. But you have only to consult the German Press, you have only to breathe the atmosphere of Berlin—which it occurred to me to do during November and December—to form an opposite conclusion. At no previous time has the Ministerial position of Great Britain been more obnoxious to that capital.

The explanation may present itself. In 1879 its ruling forces were led into a new system, and detached themselves from Russia. The celebrated journey of Prince Bismarck to Vienna is thought to have begun, at least it marks, the epoch I refer to. It was hard for the ruling powers of Berlin to detach themselves from Russia. There were certain risks to be incurred and certain prepossessions to be sacrificed. But it was harder to find that they had alienated Russia—to some extent at least—when Russia was doomed in a short time to be sustained, encouraged, fostered by Great Britain. In 1877 the deepest penetration could not have enabled them to realise such a contingency. It is quite true, no doubt, that both of these proceedings have been sheltered as the action of a European concert.

The imposing term “European concert” has been so much resorted to of late, that it becomes desirable to look into its actual significance. A European concert to oppose the

interest and aim of nearly every European State is, in itself, a paradoxical conception. The European concert we are asked to bow to, as a mystic force, does not work for the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies, which it might easily have compassed. It does not work for the establishment of a more firm, more civilised and more invulnerable power on the Bosphorus than any which the head of the Mahometan religion can present there. It does not endeavour to arrange upon the Pruth a barrier against the enterprises which have three times within about fifty years exposed Constantinople to the march of an invader. It does not seek the balance of power. It is literally founded on its ruin, or at least on its abeyance. It is a concert for transferring to the scale of overbearing force as many kingdoms and republics as can be persuaded to adhere to it. It is arrayed not against that which it is desirable to check, but against that which it is desirable to strengthen and uphold, so long as no equivalent is found for it. Under its auspices the Law of Nations is defied, and territorial encroachment insolently aimed at. Aspiring to usurp the name and speak with the authority of Europe, it excludes from its circle not only such well-known States as Belgium and Holland, but all the Scandinavian kingdoms and the whole Iberian Peninsula. It wholly overlooks the principle of 1856, that the Sublime Porte was to be incorporated in the system of the Continent. It tends to reduce that Empire to a lower depth than it had reached before of both humiliation and insolvency. It is viewed with conscientious shame and ill-concealed aversion by nearly all the Powers which technically form it.

But to put it in its proper light, and to suggest the mode in which it ought to be regarded, we should reflect a moment on the way in which a concert so arranged would have affected modern history had it been allowed to supersede the higher and the nobler forms of combination which have

usually existed. During the half-century which followed Ottoman success in 1453, it would have declared its confidence in the Mahometan dominion, and helped the warlike Sultans of that age by fire and sword to reach the Adriatic. It would have been the faithful instrument of Austria and Spain when, under Charles V. and his successors, they became a menace to the Continent. As soon as that ascendancy subsided, at Westphalia, in 1648, during another century it would have allied itself with France and those who ruled her, have fed upon their promises, confided in their virtue, and ministered to their supremacy. If that idol, under such persevering adoration, have ever passed away, this form of concert would have found its present object of subserviency. Had it prevailed three hundred years, instead of being invented by the present occupant of Downing Street, Europe must have fallen under the general dominion which it is the leading aim of foreign policy to obviate.

My Lords, this type of European concert has lately had a signal illustration in the Memoirs of Prince Metternich, who, in strict accuracy, may be regarded as its founder, and from whom the present leader of the Government appears to have derived it. These Memoirs are accessible to every one. In them we watch, with the assistance of the master who directed it, the operation of the system at Troppau, at Laybach, at Verona. It arrayed itself, as now, against the States which were not able to resist it. Its aim, however, was more limited than modern fashion has bestowed upon it. It required weaker States to guard their institutions from reform. It did not call upon them to give up their territory at the dictation of a rival. In this connection there are many topics which I abandon for the present.

Let me conclude, as I began, by absolving the noble Earl the Secretary of State from any great responsibility. Nothing has occurred which might not have been anticipated

and predicted from the sinister form the Government assumed after the General Election. If these despatches are withheld, the recall of Sir Henry Layard will hardly seem to have the vindication which it calls for. If they are produced, the Motion cannot be considered as a useless one.

After the debate,

Lord Stratheden and Campbell would not detain the House ; as his noble friend beneath (Lord Houghton) could not speak again, he felt bound to answer some of the reflections which the noble Earl the Secretary of State (Earl Granville) had tried to cast upon him. Had the language of his noble friend been calculated to promote hostilities between Greece and the Sublime Porte, such reflections might be justified. His language tended altogether in the opposite direction. In exact proportion as the false interpretation of the Berlin Conference was rectified, in-exact proportion as the Greek ambition was discountenanced, in exact proportion as the Law of Nations was asserted to correct it, the hope and chance of an adjustment was augmented. His noble friend had, therefore, been promoting the very object of the Government. If he was, besides, possessed of special information, he was bound to use it in the interest of peace, as he had done on this occasion.

The noble Earl the Secretary of State had endeavoured to persuade the House that some irregularity attended this proceeding. On his (Lord Stratheden and Campbell's) part there had been no irregularity whatever. He had given notice to call attention to certain correspondence a fortnight before the day selected for discussion. The notice had never been changed at all ; it had only been completed, in accord with the most established usage, by a Motion being attached to it. It had been then repeatedly postponed during the absence of

the noble Earl, and at the request of Her Majesty's Government.

But the noble Earl had made another observation, which was even more remarkable. He had complained that all discussion of foreign policy was inconvenient at that moment to the Government. In that case, why did he not avert it? He might immediately have done so. During the last five years, neither under the late Government nor the existing one, had he (Lord Stratheden and Campbell) ever hesitated to suspend a Motion when the Secretary of State declared negotiations would be hindered by it. But when the noble Earl accepted the debate he could not properly complain of it. Considering how much forbearance had been shown during his absence, and how on every point his wishes had been followed, in hazarding censorious remarks the noble Earl had not displayed the prudence or the taste for which he used to be conspicuous.

There was nothing further to reply to. He had maintained that the withdrawal of Sir Henry Layard wantonly destroyed an efficient agency for British objects in the Ottoman Dominion ; that the withdrawal was an error ; and that it had soon been followed by errors greater than itself.

June 30th, 1881.

GREEK FRONTIER.

ADDRESS FOR A PAPER.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the further correspondence on the Greek Frontier, and to move for any Protocol or Treaty which forms the basis of the European concert alluded to in several despatches, said :—My Lords,—Although this notice has been frequently postponed, at the desire or suggestion of the Government, in order that the latest correspondence might appear, we only just possess it, and I will not pretend that I am thoroughly acquainted with it. I am induced to bring the subject forward by the circumstance of having slightly entered into it in August last, when nearly every one else had disappeared, and since been led into pursuing it. Had I been certain that discussion would arise from any other quarter I should have been much inclined to avoid it. Whatever bears upon the East provokes comparatively little interest at present, although there are not wanting dangers to remind us that our lamp upon that subject ought to be perpetually burning. At least, with regard to the Greek Frontier, the time is come for looking back on what has happened. A lucid version has appeared in the French Circular, to which I will endeavour to conform myself.

My Lords, it would be an error to suppose that the Russian march towards Constantinople, involving consequences as it did, involved among them a necessity of changing the Greek Frontier. The Treaty of San Stefano, which embodied the ideas and will of Russia, had no allusion to the subject. It

would also be an error to suppose that our Plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Berlin led the way in raising such a question. They took measures to uphold the interest of the Hellenic race wherever it existed against the new demands of the Slavonic race; but they desired to reduce as far as possible all territorial accessions. A territorial accession in the interest of Greece was first proposed by M. Waddington, who represented France during the Congress.

It is quite true that the Greek Frontier, as established in 1830, has been objected to by some remarkable authorities. Prince Leopold, when he was asked to take the sovereignty of Greece, desired to enlarge it. Mr. Finlay, the historian, proposed that something should be added to Greece, and, at the same time, that something should be added to the Ottoman Empire. The late Lord Strangford, in a conversation recorded by Mr. Nassau Senior, in his well-known travels, spoke ambiguously, however, of letting Greece obtain more than the line of 1830 had conceded.

But these authorities have now been more than counterbalanced by the voice of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, given in a recent volume, for which we are indebted to the Dean of Westminster. In a memorandum only drawn up last year—it is page 60—Lord Stratford de Redcliffe encounters the whole case advanced for the enlargement of the Hellenic Kingdom. The House may recollect that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, as a diplomatist, was profoundly mixed up with the creation of that Kingdom. He was amongst its earliest advisers. He was thoroughly conversant with its geographical relations. He had watched its history from the outset with advantages no one else could rival. If I were not anxious to detain the House as little as is possible, I should read through the grave and parting admonition he bequeathed to us. These are the main lessons. He contends that the Christian Powers would be perfectly unjustified in forcing a demand upon the

Sultan ; that the Greeks have no claim whatever on the Ottoman Empire ; that the existing frontier, recommended by three Plenipotentiaries, and accepted by the London Conference in 1829-30, is essentially a good one ; that a large and serious concession would encourage the Greeks in their desire for another, and could not possibly be lasting. His view is summed up in an emphatic phrase of this kind : That the Turks having given no cause of offence to the Greeks, for the interests of Europe required to be strengthened by measures of relief rather than weakened by further acts of spoliation.

So much for Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. The Congress of Berlin may defend itself, however, on the ground that his opinion, pronounced in 1880, was unknown to them in 1878. They framed their celebrated Article and Protocol. The two Powers concerned were recommended to negotiate.

But as Greece made no offer of indemnity, negotiation of the kind was demonstrably fruitless. It was idle to ask the Porte without return to sacrifice a portion of its territory, considering the state of its finances before the war and after. It was like asking a racing man who had lately become insolvent which of his horses he would be disposed to give away, not to satisfy a creditor, but to aggrandise a rival. No good was done at Prevesa or Constantinople. The case for mediation had arisen which the Congress had anticipated. Mediation, according to public law, is the effort of a neutral Power, or several together, to induce two conflicting States to adopt a settlement which is proposed to them. There is not any title to compulsion in the process. The States at variance retain their freedom to accept or reject.

A Conference was summoned at Berlin with the avowed design of promoting mediation. If the expedient really aimed at mediation it was ill-chosen and unfortunate. If it aimed at something else, it was no less clearly disingenuous. The assembled Powers became committed to a frontier

which the Porte was certain to reject, but which its authors could not easily abandon. Had they confined themselves to mediation, another frontier, or a second or third, might have been substituted. But they assumed the function of dictators, and would not swerve from a precipitate conclusion.

A naval demonstration was repeatedly alluded to, and seemed to be impending to enforce it.

My Lords, when the mediators threw off their disguise, and admitted that they were rather wolves than sheep, that they were rather *gendarmes* than pacifiers, that they did not aim at a reciprocal consent but a one-sided spoliation, the Sublime Porte resisted, baffled and defeated them. The navy was dispersed, the Conference renounced, and arbitration offered.

On this stage we ought to dwell a moment. When arbitration was propounded, the recent attitude and language of the Conference was thoroughly condemned by those who had resorted to it.

What is arbitration? Here also public law replies for us. It is process founded on the resolution of two States to accept the arbitrating body as an infallible tribunal, and to abide by its decision. But this is the exact authority the Conference had aimed at. The mediators claimed the deference which only arbitrators can pretend to. But they exposed themselves the moment they declared that mediation and arbitration are distinct from one another. If they are the same, why was arbitration subsequently aimed at? If they are distinct, why for a long time were they confounded? It must have been from either ignorance or violence.

The effect, however, was deplorable. Greece was inflamed into what appeared to her legitimate rapacity, to be upheld by nearly ruinous expenditure. Her Press, her Sovereign, her leading men abounded in the fiery demand for territory Europe—as they were taught to fancy—had assigned to them.

The moment arbitration was projected their title vanished altogether. It was not a matter of surprise that arbitration was repelled by the Sublime Porte, after the illegal mode in which the Conference had acted. It had inspired deep distrust in both the possible belligerents. An appeal to Germany was made by our Foreign Office. It is found in the first despatch of the new volume. Negotiations at Constantinople proceeded under German influence, and ended in the Convention now before us. As the French Circular interprets it, Epirus is retained by the Sublime Porte, while Thessaly is alienated from it. Such is the outline of the different stages which occurred in the transaction, and there is only one I should desire for a moment to recur to.

The House will see that the Conference, so far from gaining the result it aimed at, was a mischievous obstruction to it. The negotiations, which terminated in a settlement—be it good or bad—were forced to overlook it. The settlement would have taken place with ten times more facility had no such Conference existed. The line projected by the Conference was always coming back to harass the negotiators at Constantinople by its spectre. It was a rock gratuitously flung into a channel of diplomacy, and it required on the part of those who flung it in the greatest art and judgment to elude it. It was a lion set upon the path by those who afterwards contended with it. Their only triumph is to have gradually surmounted the obstruction they had recklessly created. If they put out a fire, it was the fire they had kindled.

The negotiators at Constantinople, under the influence of Germany, inasmuch as they averted war, deserve the praise of energy and judgment. But it is the energy and judgment which struggle from a quagmire fancifully entered, unless indeed some latent power required the plunge and barely

sanctioned the escape from it. It may seem, however, to your Lordships that it is more important to glance at the results of the transaction which survive it than to dwell on any of the blots which marked it in its progress. The most palpable result is the diminution of the Ottoman Empire. Its loss is estimated at £1,000,000 sterling of revenue. It is a blow to all the Powers which have to guard Constantinople by its agency. It is a direct impediment to the various reforms they have demanded, and for which expenditure was necessary. It is a new misfortune to the creditors of Turkey.

But it may be thought, at least, that the Hellenic Party, whom I do not undervalue, ought to be congratulated. Even this is doubtful. If I can venture to interpret them, the Hellenic Party, ever since the time of Lord Byron, their heroic founder, have always looked to a resuscitated Athens. Since the beginning of the struggle with the Porte they have aspired to make Athens the intellectual, political, artistic centre which it used to be. But territorial extension of the kind which has occurred—as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, indeed, has pointed out—must foster the well-known desire of the Greeks to move towards Constantinople. Were that object ever compassed, so far from shining as a mistress in the East, Athens must again become subordinate, forgotten and provincial, as she was throughout the night of servitude and dust from which, half a century ago, her nationality and monuments awakened. It is true, indeed, that beyond the range of the Hellenic Party we encounter a highly vague but rather prevalent impression that by extending Greece something is accomplished for the solution of the Eastern Question, should adverse fate supplant the Ottoman dominion on the Bosphorus. As soon as it is recollected that the population of the whole Greek race within the Kingdom, within the Islands and European Turkey, is

only rated at 5,000,000, even by Hellenic advocates such as Mr. Lewis Sargeant—whose work appeared a year ago—the fallacy of such a calculation is apparent. Even if Greece assimilated every conflicting race between the Danube and the Sea of Marmora for such an aim, her force would be inadequate. It would not be difficult to show that as regards the safety of Constantinople—against Russia—the aggrandisement of Greece is not only useless, but injurious.

But I cannot dwell at length on any one of the results to be considered. The next, and last, is most important. The Convention between Greece and the Sublime Porte now before us has no guarantee to uphold the latter against perpetual demands for the unhappy frontier which the Conference has stereotyped. Greece merely acquiesces in the large amount of territory ceded to her. The gift is so arranged as to achieve the work of a privation.

The object which put the Congress of Berlin in movement on the subject is quite as distant as it used to be. It was to bring Greece and the Sublime Porte into a more friendly and less precarious relation. Greece now aspires to the frontier which the Conference had traced more eagerly than she aspired before to undefined and general encroachment. She is more restless from the ill-conceived arrangements which had no pretext but their tendency to soothe her. The Porte, although reduced, continues to be menaced. At least, the frontier traced at Berlin may be constantly invoked as that which Europe sanctions, so long as the name of Europe is appropriated by the concert which adopted it.

Your Lordships may thus see in what manner the two subjects of my notice are inseparably linked together. If the consent is still recognised, its frontier is still the goal and the horizon to be aimed at. In that case there is perpetual disquietude for Greece, perpetual hazard for the Ottoman Empire. If the concert disappears before the touch of reason

or of policy, its frontier may be set aside, and thus the new arrangement will be comparatively lasting. In the interest of that arrangement—although on other grounds as well—the concert merits strict examination from your Lordships. To save time I pass over the despatches in which its authority is blazoned ; but I have brought down here to-night a series to refer to if desirable. With regard, therefore, to the concert so much vaunted, there is only one thing to be remarked upon the surface, even by those who do not care to go too deeply into it. They cannot but remark its inability and nullity. As regards the Greek frontier, it had no effect but that of exciting animosity between two Powers, since the arrangement was brought about by the controlling influence of Berlin. Beyond France there is but one opinion as to what has lately taken place in Tunis, although there may be different judgments as to how the Government have acted. We have observed in Tunis assurances unexecuted, war undeclared, a considerable blow inflicted on the Ottoman Empire by one of the allies in the Crimea. If a European concert has no vigour to retard or discountenance or place in its true light a consummation of this kind, it may be fairly asked for what is it available ? Is it for promoting Ottoman improvement—which, indeed, it ostentatiously demanded ? It has not established one by its remonstrances. The solution is not a remote one. No concert in which Russia largely figures can exercise an influence over the Sultan. Persuasive faculty must always be denied to it. It was long ago explained by so great a master of international affairs as M. Guizot, that the Sublime Porte may listen to the Powers which uphold, but not when they are mingled and confounded with the Power which habitually assails it.

My Lords, when the sterility and weakness of the so-termed concert has been noted, we are naturally led on to ask how much of Europe has been incorporated in it. We are thus

led to ascertain that even nominally it consists only of six Powers, from which Spain and Sweden, as well as others less important, are excluded. Of course those countries cannot be unconscious of the humiliation they submit to. Sweden has an army of above 100,000 regulars, and a hundred vessels in her navy. But that is not the limit of her virtual capacity. We must reflect on Sweden, not only as she has been, not only as she is, but as a steady and enlightened policy would make her. Whenever great political capacity arises there, Sweden will attract towards herself the minor States to which she has a geographical proximity. Embracing Denmark only in her system, her force would not be inconsiderable. Can it be said that Sweden was never found in other European combinations? She entered into that of 1815 against Napoleon I., as the recent life of Mr. Herries has informed us—Mr. Herries, who at that time was the distributor of subsidies to Europe. In that union even Switzerland appeared.

But to proceed to Spain, so wantonly disparaged. Neither in military nor in naval force is she inferior to Sweden. A volume would not hold the recollections we efface when we declare that Spain is not a member of the European system. We must forget the great anxiety her fleet, during the last century, from time to time occasioned to this country. We must forget the labours of the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsula. We must forget even the mode in which the recent war between France and Germany originated. Our own engagements are, perhaps, the clearest proof that Spain ought not to be entirely disregarded, as having passed into an obsolete existence. We are bound to defend Portugal by guarantees so numerous that when Mr. Canning wished to send them to Lord Liverpool—the statement is his own—he could not find in his Department a red box large enough to hold them. But Spain is the only Power by

which Portugal, in some contingencies, might be endangered. According to the doctrine of the Government that Europe is complete without a Spanish Representative, Great Britain is prepared at any moment to support her old ally against nonentity and vacancy. It is only from a shadow of the past that Portugal is guarded. If, indeed, the Government have formed a resolution not to defend Portugal, whatever happens, it may be subtle and long-sighted to prepare the world for their inaction by assuming, even now, that Spain has passed beyond the limits of reality. However, there is still a weighty ground on which it might appear to them that Spain ought not to be dishonoured for equivocal or inconsiderable objects. It is that by retaining Gibraltar we cannot but preserve a certain sensibility on her part. The sensibility may rise to discontent when it is wantonly inflamed, when it is superfluously trifled with.

But, my Lords, the principle on which the concert is established is even more adapted to call in question its validity than the startling voids and perilous deficiencies by which it lays the ground for war, by which it fosters enterprise, imposes self-assertion, and scatters animosity around it. It is a concert to uphold, to second, to co-operate with that Power which is usually regarded as aggressive, and is often found to be so. That I may not appear to go beyond the rules of international amenity, let me remark that to describe one Power as aggressive is by no means so injurious as to ignore, to question, or connive at the existence of another. An aggressive Power must have considerable qualities and great resources to impel it. Now, our foreign policy—in spite of variations and vicissitudes—has so far been uniform in tenor that it has nearly always tried to form a balance to the aggressive States—wherever they might be—by which the rest of Europe was awakened into vigilance. The opposite idea might have, indeed, a sort of vindication. To seek an

intimate relation with the aggressive Power of the day, in the hope of guiding, moderating and correcting it, may be an amiable design, and if history was blotted out might be a rational experiment. But it has only led, when fairly tried, to conflict and embarrassment. It was attempted, in reference to France, by Charles II. and James II. A century of war with that Power was insufficient to atone for it. It was attempted—far less decidedly, of course—by the late Earl of Aberdeen in reference to Russia. The tombs of the Crimea, to which our attention was called the other day, have been its gloomy refutation. The true objection to this mode of acting may be easily presented. It cannot win the friendship of the aggressive Power and restrain its movement simultaneously. It does uphold its spirit and facilitate its enterprises. It unavoidably insures the hatred and contempt of all the States which feel themselves deserted.

If, therefore, heroism, duty and consistency are finally renounced as unconvincing in their claims and doubtful in their basis, if the defence of Europe is chimerical, if great examples ought to be forgotten and great traditions set aside in any age which is thought to lean towards material delight or sceptical activity, if it is better to be guided by the head of Machiavelli than by the ardour of Lord Chatham, even then reflecting prudence will not sanction the new principle on which the concert has been founded.

But, my Lords, the doctrine it maintains should be regarded as the true criterion by which the virtue of the concert may be measured. After the Conference at Berlin it was gravely and repeatedly laid down that the Sublime Porte was bound without a fragment of indemnity to sacrifice as much as they demanded of its territory to the award, as they were pleased to term it, of the Powers who usurped the name of Europe at that moment. It was entirely forgotten that according to public law a Sovereign is not at liberty to

alienate his territory unless the nation has consented. The whole subject of alienation is discussed in Vattel, Book I., chapter i., section 265, which noble lords may readily examine.

At first sight the doctrine of the concert is astounding. If a Sovereign is ordered to give up cities, as the Sultan was required to abandon Mezzovo, Larissa and Janina, he may be ordered to renounce his capital with similar authority. United Europe—with some omitted Powers—may claim a distant jurisdiction. China and Japan may find their distribution altered by its fiat. It might be necessary for Brazil to enlarge the South American Republic. Let us suppose, however, that the doctrine has a limitation, and is asserted only for the benefit of States which insurrection has created as against the States from which they have detached themselves. Even in that case it might bear hardly on Great Britain. United Europe may resolve that a large part of Canada is necessary to a young and mighty federation stifling and panting between the Gulf of Mexico and the St. Lawrence. However, the doctrine may be limited to one quarter of the globe, as well as to a single form of national encroachment. Even then, Spain—regarded by the concert as so vanishing a Power—might be instructed to make more room in the Iberian Peninsula for Portugal, which is so great in Africa, and has been so successful in America. But there is a better illustration in the case of Holland and Belgium. Belgium sprang from civil war with Holland as Greece emerged from civil war with Sultan Mahmoud. Belgium is so far from being sufficient in resources that it was thought desirable to neutralise her—a process which is not free from inconveniences. Luxemburg is a remote dependency of Holland, on the south-eastern frontier of Belgium. In language, taste and nationality, it is identified with Belgium. But, more than that, you cannot

urge that its possession is indispensable to Holland. Not many years ago the King of Holland was inclined to dispose of it. United Europe, with the greatest plausibility—if they may order anything—might order him to part with it gratuitously. A European object—the security of Belgium—would be advanced by the concession. No European object would have been forwarded by the concession so dictatorially urged upon the Sultan. Will the united Powers reply that they are crusaders in their essence: that they are only leagued against Mahometan dominion—that nothing else can tempt their zeal—that nothing else can shelter their rapacity? But still they ask the Sultan to be guided by their counsels; but still they claim the part of his advisers and his patrons.

My Lords, this flagrant inconsistency, if it escapes the ridicule, may yet demand the hesitation of the world before it acquiesces in a concert of which—to sum up the charges I have brought against it—the nullity is only equalled by the arrogance, of which the basis is as weak as the pretension is intolerable. It might further be contended that a series of results would be desirable for Europe to which the so-called concert is a barrier. But I am more inclined to strict reserve upon that subject.

There is another topic not so easily passed over. In spite of these remarks against a system to which the Government are leaning, I absolve the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of all responsibility. He may differ in opinion. He may assure the House that he is not to be regarded as the Earl of Dudley, controlled in the affairs of his office by the Duke of Wellington. He may insist that his relation to the Prime Minister is more like that of Lord Bolingbroke to the Earl of Oxford. He may accuse himself, he cannot force another person to accuse him. The origin of so untenable a concert is sufficiently

explained without imputing any grave degree of error upon his part. It is found in the peculiar circumstances in which a surreptitious Government presented itself.

It is needless, and perhaps imprudent, to dilate on the course of the actual First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Gladstone) during the five years which preceded his return to power. It may safely be remarked, however, that love of one Empire and hatred of another may kindle eloquence, but cannot organise a policy. A concert in which Russia was really the preponderating force inevitably sprang from the arrangement, which is still as unexplained and mysterious as when it burst upon our wonder. Such a concert could not be averted by any Secretary of State, however indefatigable.

There is only one objection against which I should desire to guard the Motion I submit, and then I may release the House with many thanks for its indulgence. It may be thought that the variety of arguments by which I have opposed the concert now before us ought to suggest a Resolution more explicit to discountenance it. It often occurred to me, and were I immediately connected with a parliamentary majority I should have probably attempted it. But such a Resolution would have been too hazardous, unless secure of being adopted. Beyond that it may not be possible for any Resolution in either House to shake or influence the concert at this moment. It may, no doubt, be put an end to if Russia, intent on other cares, no longer feels inclined to uphold it. The voice of Germany at any moment may dissolve it. It does not seem that Austria is much disposed to recognise its cogency. But long reflection has convinced me that its proper grave will only be discovered in the Ministerial cessation of its author, who does not sit among your Lordships. On that account Motions with regard to it are less important than they might be otherwise. It is useful—if I am not deceived—to ascertain, as this notice will, how far the

concert stands upon a Treaty, as the concert of the Three Powers was formed on one after the events of 1815. But no one ought, on that account, to overlook the certainty that a more stringent agency is requisite to bring back the Continental world either to salutary aims or to legitimate alliances.

The noble Lord concluded by moving the Resolution of which he had given notice.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell, in reply, said : My Lords, I shall only detain the House by one or two remarks the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has rendered necessary. Although absolving him from blame, I was not aware, as he supposes, that I lavished eulogy upon him. But now, at least, he has well merited the praise of courage in venturing to set up his own authority against that of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe on such a point as the Greek Frontier. He has also won a title to the character of prudence in not attempting to-night to uphold the European concert against the various reproaches it elicits. The noble Earl professed inability to understand the drift of all my former observations. It may be resumed in a minute. I indicated that the Conference at Berlin was a flagrant and an unpardonable error, which nearly led to war between Greece and the Sublime Porte ; that the Greek Frontier was arranged at last, as it might have been at first, by German influence at Constantinople ; that unless the so-called European concert is dispelled the arrangement cannot be a lasting one ; that it ought to be abandoned upon every ground which just ideas of foreign policy suggest to us.

It now appears to be devoid of any special Treaty to consolidate it ; so that, although the Motion is withdrawn on that account, it will not have been useless. Some noble lords have been betrayed to-night into a rather intricate

discussion on the merit or the inconvenience of the concerts organised in Europe. Let me suggest to them a practical criterion when any system of the kind is offered to their notice. Let them inquire and ascertain whether the concert is designed to check aggressive power, or, on the contrary, to aid it.

August 15th, 1881.

TUNIS.

RESOLUTION.

MY LORDS,—At this time of the Session and this hour of the evening it is not easy to command the favour of the House on a great subject. If I desired to express at all completely the ideas which have occurred to me during the course of the transaction, or during the long interval in which the notice was delayed, I ought to look to other channels for producing them. But as I fully share the view of my noble friend (the Earl of Dunraven) who brought the Motion forward, as the two speeches we have heard have both of them been adverse to it, and as I am led to think he counts on my support, I feel bound, however brief and hurried it may be, if possible to give it. The noble lord who followed him indulged in some extraordinary criticism. He complained that the subject was too frequently adverted to. Since the end of June it has never been adverted to at all, although its phases have been multiplying. Before that time all the notices on Tunis came from his side of the House. The question has never until to-day been introduced upon these benches. What is more material, the House has never until to-day had any opportunity to pronounce a judgment on the character of the transaction. The noble lord has laid down as a maxim that the assurances of foreign Governments should be accepted as substantial. It may be satisfactory that such a maxim should proceed from any quarter to which foreign policy has been a theme of mediation or discussion.

But the noble Lord does not go so far as to contend that assurances may be relied on when they are shown to be illusory. Can he maintain that the assurances of the French Government have been performed? The whole series of events involves a constant violation of them. I listened with much attention to the speech of the noble Earl the Secretary of State, but could not ascertain from it a single ground on which the present Motion is objected to. It is not a Motion to reflect on the proceedings of the Government, which I may, therefore, now pass over. It is a Motion to affirm that interference with Ottoman dominion in North Africa tends to endanger the peace of Europe. In that sense alone would I discuss it.

There is one part of the subject which tends, perhaps more rapidly than any other, to the conclusion my noble friend has recommended to us. The French Government maintains—to justify its violence—that Tunis is not incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. In that manner it admits that if Tunis is incorporated in the Ottoman Empire it has been led into considerable errors. But according to the Foreign Office, and the noble Earl presiding in it, there is no doubt at all upon the subject. The French Government is thus condemned and reprimanded by the British Government in spite of all its friendly language and ingenious connivance. But the British Government is condemned by itself, since, if Tunis is a portion of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain was bound either to insure its safety or to protest against violation of it. The position of the British Government is, therefore, fatally untenable. It shelters the accused, while it rejects the plea on which alone he can defend himself. The French Government can only vindicate itself by a successful reference to history and to treaties. But no such reference suffices. The connection of Tunis and the Ottoman Empire has had so many illustrations that it is really difficult to choose out

of the number which to bring before your Lordships. My noble friend has mentioned one I never heard before, and which appears to me conclusive—namely, that in a Conference which happened at Vienna, before the negotiations and the Treaties of 1856, France acknowledged, in a formal way, the dependency of Tunis on the Sultan.

It is worth while to add a circumstance which shows that during the whole Crimean war she systematically recognised it. During the Crimean war Tunis was contributing a military force to the united armies which upheld the Ottoman Empire against Russia. She was either a fifth ally, in the same rank with the Sublime Porte, with France, Great Britain and Sardinia, or else a vassal of the former. She was not a fifth ally of the co-operating Powers, or history would have mentioned it. She therefore acted—and France considered her to act—on the obligation of a vassal sending a contingent to the suzerain. Where is the reply? But did Tunis, after the Crimean war, become divested of the status which then undoubtedly belonged to her? So late as 1863 M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, when it was attempted to negotiate a Tunisian loan at Paris, pointed out that the authority of the Sultan ought to be invoked to give it the validity it wanted. Since 1863 has Tunis ceased to be dependent? To support the argument is useless; but M. Rousseau, the French Consul, and author of the *Annales Tunisiennes*, would give voluminous materials for doing so. When the French and British Governments have both been led into a position they are not able to defend, their influence is lowered, and when their influence is lowered the peace of Europe is less secure than it otherwise would be.

My Lords, the Motion gains new support by remarking what might have been done, and what has been omitted, as to Italy. It is allowed that the Italian Government were anxious, and in some degree impatient, to combine with us in

such precautionary measures as might have guarded Tunis against the fate which has befallen it. Italy, since 1870, when her unity became complete, has been a great, a splendid and an unappropriated element to tempt the labour of diplomacy. She has resided in the air without a bias or direction, except so far as Germany in some degree controlled her. At length the opportunity to draw her strongly to the objects of Great Britain, which are not alien to her own, was forced upon the Government. It was abandoned for no purpose. To defend the latter phrase it is essential for a moment to advert to a prevailing fallacy, which is not less unfounded than prevailing, and which, indeed, appears to underlie the whole course the Government have followed as to Tunis.

There is a general assumption that France is an ally, to be on that account conciliated or condoned in any deviation she adopts, until it reaches great or unsupportable extremity. No doubt, in disposition and in feeling, since the war of 1870 the relations of France and Great Britain have maintained—down to the present year—their former cordiality. But alliance, in the sense of common action, perished with the Empire. It perished as the flag descended from the Tuileries at half-past three o'clock on the memorable September 4th—an incident which cannot be forgotten by those who happened to observe it. From that time France has had but two preoccupations—externally at least—first, to withstand calamities which multiplied around her, then to recover the position she held in Europe before the war with Germany affected it. She has not been able or disposed to share the line and to pursue the objects of Great Britain, as she used to do. She has not been able or disposed to venture upon any course by which Russia would be alienated. So deeply was the situation felt in 1871, that at the Black Sea Conference of London, under the auspices of the noble Earl

the Secretary of State, it was not thought worth while to wait for her Ambassador before commencing the proceedings. However, that is but an isolated proof, which leads to others more convincing.

When the Eastern Question reappeared in 1874, over a series of transactions in which her aid would have been precious and her countenance important—the alliance of the three Emperors, the Herzegovinian, Servian and Bulgarian rebellions, the war which they produced, the negotiations which preceded it—the voice of France, which so powerfully operated in 1853, was altogether wanting. Even at the Congress of Berlin—except as regards Greece—you cannot urge that France had any telling weight in the direction it adopted. The French alliance, therefore, we had lost by no fault on either side, but by events which violently drew one Power into a different set of calculations and of thoughts from that which used to bind the two to one another. Until the reclamation of Alsace and Lorraine has been achieved, or else until it is despaired of, the greatest minds and soundest combinations will not restore a French alliance which is more than negative and formal. Since France is unattainable, whatever language she may hold, whatever rulers may direct her, you have to look to other Western Powers as a substitute. The affair of Tunis, although sinister in itself, presented such a chance of gaining Italy as had never before occurred, and is not likely to come back again. But we have failed to grasp what might have been a substance in order to retain—at no little cost of dignity—what must, until another epoch has been opened, continue to be nothing but a shadow. Italy is not only unattached and undecided in her policy, but embittered against France and discontented with Great Britain. The peace of Europe becomes endangered by her attitude.

If we examine the question still more closely, it seems to

me that such interference with the Ottoman Empire in North Africa tends to European war under two categories. It tends, in the first instance, to re-establish an antagonism between France and Great Britain, which we had hoped that many centuries of strife had finished and exhausted. The division is produced when Tunis is encroached upon ; becomes more grave when Tripoli is compromised ; should Egypt be involved, is certain to be more thoroughly accentuated. In Egypt elements of variance between France and Great Britain are abundant ; if only because one Power designed the Canal, the other has the greater interest in using and preserving it. Whatever nourishes a French ascendancy in Egypt must embitter the relations of the countries. The comparative tranquillity of France has been purchased by struggles and by sacrifices which elude the grasp of the historian—of which no picture can be adequate. It cannot be denied that Her Majesty's Government have helped her to resume the demon of aggression and rapacity against which William III. first led us to protest, and which the Duke of Wellington was thought at last to have exorcised.

But it is not only by reviving discord between the leading Western Powers that the risk of European war has been promoted. We ought to bear in mind the consequences of that discord. As soon as it is felt, an irresistible temptation to revive the troubles of the Eastern Question is administered. Greece observes the moment for reclaiming the frontier which a recent Conference imprudently propounded. Russia is invited to cross the Pruth again, if only to adjust the difficulties of Bulgaria. Germany and Austria can hardly look on such a movement with indifference. But, disregarding these contingencies, it cannot be assumed that the Ottoman Empire will always be disposed to leave invasion unresisted. The experience of 1877 forbids such an assumption.

But it is not enough to show that any Motion is correct,

unless it is seen, at the same time, that it would be productive of advantage to adopt it.

In France there is a considerable party opposed to the aggression upon Tunis, which has found organs in the Duc de Broglie and M. Clemenceau—great names abroad, of which the first, at least, is known in this country. They seem to represent extremes of opposite opinion, although concurring on this subject. The debate in the Chamber of Deputies on May 23rd, the debate in the Senate on July 25th, reveal the current of opinion, which the voice of this House would tend to dignify and strengthen.

Another result to which the Motion, if adopted, may contribute, is that of warning the French Government itself that lawless and insulting policy directed to encroach upon the Ottoman Empire, and not directed to replace it, has found a just interpretation, and may provoke a serious discouragement. They may be led to see that such a policy will make the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine more difficult than otherwise it would be; that allies will not be found to put an end to losses and to remedy disasters which, instead of being a school of moderation and forbearance, have excited a contempt for right and hunger for disturbance. If, therefore, my noble friend thinks proper to divide the House, I shall give an unhesitating vote in favour of his Motion.

March 30th, 1882.

TURKEY—PASSAGE IN THE BOSPHORUS.
RUSSIAN ARMED SHIPS.

OBSERVATIONS—QUESTION.

THE statements I refer to in the question I am about to ask Her Majesty's Government have proceeded from the Constantinople correspondents of the *Times* and the *Standard*, March 11th, from the Constantinople correspondents of the *Times* and the *Standard*, March 24th, and from the Constantinople correspondents of the *Times*, March 27th. The most important of them is that the Porte had entered a formal protest against the passage of the *Moskowa* with seven hundred soldiers on board through the Bosphorus. The *Moskowa* is described as one of the volunteer fleet, used in time of peace as a merchantman. She was bound from Nicolaieff, the naval arsenal in the Black Sea, to Vladivostock, on the east coast of Siberia. There is a statement with regard to another vessel for which a firman had been asked for and conceded.

The necessity of maintaining the Bosphorus and Dardanelles against ships of war has been recognised in many treaties. It is specifically laid down in the 1st Article of the Treaty of 1841, by which the Egyptian difficulty of that period was settled. No doubt the Black Sea Conference of 1871 enabled ships of war to ascend the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, but only at the desire of the Sultan. The allegations I have mentioned may be perfectly unfounded; but, if correct, ought not to be entirely passed over. The circumstances of the

late war ; the particular relations of the Treaty of San Stefano to the Congress of Berlin ; the mysterious accession of the First Lord of the Treasury to the offices he holds, create in Russia a not unnatural desire to surmount the barriers which, speaking roughly, guard the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, and which a few years back had nearly vanished altogether. A merchantman develops into a ship of war by easy stages. Whatever goes through the Bosphorus may possibly remain there for a considerable period. In this way a naval occupation may be silently affected so as to add no little force to the Embassy with which it is connected.

I have but one more remark to offer. Of all the fallacies the Eastern Question has created, possibly the greatest lies in the assumption that whatever the Sublime Porte is led to ratify should cease to be an object of distrust among the Powers which maintain its independence. Those Powers maintain its independence not for Ottoman but for European interests and objects. There are many instances in which the diplomatic influence of Russia may lead the Porte to ratify what it is anxious to oppose, and what, at least, ought not to be conceded. In the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, by which in 1833 Russia and the Porte were bound for eight years to defend one another—a Treaty which drew forth a protest from France and Great Britain—this truth received a well-known illustration.

But I will add no further preface to the question. I have to ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are prepared to give any information as to the alleged passage of Russian ships with armed men through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

May 22nd, 1882.

EGYPT (POLITICAL) AFFAIRS.

MOTION.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, who had given notice to "call attention to the Ministerial position," and to move for further correspondence upon Egypt, said that he had proposed to address the House at some length upon the notice he had given ; but he well knew that after the long and unexpected time absorbed in legislative business it would be impossible to do so. He would, however, take the opportunity of referring for a moment to the state of Egypt.

The House had seen the Ottoman despatch upon the naval movement of the Western Powers. The variance with the Western Powers it displayed might lead to the impression that some further measure would be necessary. Having given long attention to the subject, he would hazard the opinion that military occupation would only be admissible if carried out by the Ottoman Empire. The Western Powers seemed inclined to that view, and it agreed with the language which a noble Marquess on the other side (the Marquess of Salisbury) had recently made use of. It was not only that such an occupation would be less unauthorised than any other : it would be far more easy to control it and to limit it. It would be controlled by the influence of the Western Powers at Cairo. It would be controlled by the influence of Germany at Constantinople. The difficulty of every military occupation was to restrict it to the aim and to the period which had been originally contemplated. An occupation wholly unattended

by the hazard of surviving its true object ought to recommend itself ; and, all the more, when it was the only one which could be upheld as authorised and regular. As the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville) might wish to make some declaration upon Egypt, he would now move for further correspondence with regard to it.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell said, as there was still a Motion before the House he might be expected to answer for a moment some of the remarks the noble Earl (Earl Granville) had offered. It might be satisfactory to learn that the troubled aspect of events in various directions inspired the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with nothing but unlimited hilarity. The House might well have exclaimed, as he went along, in a well-known phrase, "*Quam facetum Consulem habemus !*" The noble Earl objected greatly to the term "Ministerial," as ambiguous. He (Lord Stratheden and Campbell) would not contend that it could never be employed in different senses. In an hotel abroad, some years ago, where the Leader of the Opposition in this country had been passing, the question was referred to him (Lord Stratheden and Campbell) whether such a personage ought to be entered in the books of the police as a Minister of State or a minister of religion. Amongst ourselves, long consecrated usage in Parliamentary proceedings might relieve the noble Earl from any doubt as to what was meant by "Ministerial." As to what could be said against the present Ministerial position, it was probable that the noble Earl would have, after Whitsuntide, sufficient opportunities of learning. He would, in deference to what had been said by the noble Earl, withdraw the Motion.

June 26th, 1882.

AFFAIRS OF TUNIS.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the affairs of Tunis, and to move for further correspondence on them, said : My Lords,—Under ordinary circumstances it would not have been improper to ask for further papers about Tunis. We know nothing, officially at least, of what has taken place during the autumn, although protracted struggles between the French and Arabs seem to have continued. We know nothing from official sources of the impression produced in France by the celebrated trial in which M. Roustan and M. Rochefort were opponents. We are also wholly uninformed as to how late events are viewed by the Italian Government. After a series of papers on Tunis, towards the end of last Session one on Tripoli was issued. Since then reticence has followed. We are only led to think, by sounds and flashes which pass through it, that behind the curtain a drama has been actively proceeding. So much might have been said for further correspondence upon Tunis under ordinary circumstances. But ordinary circumstances do not now present themselves. Night after night the two Houses of Parliament are agitated upon Egypt. The connection of Tunisian and Egyptian difficulties by those who have watched them both will hardly be disputed. It was long ago predicted that an Egyptian Question would arise from the Tunisian one. In the course of my remarks I hope briefly to explain in what manner the subjects are related to each other.

It may first be convenient to remind the House, although in a very perfunctory manner, of the events which formed the Tunisian complication. We need not dwell upon the language of the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury) to M. Waddington at Berlin, because, whether or not the circumstances justified it, it does not seem to have had any influence on subsequent proceedings. M. Waddington was deprived of power, and never acted upon any lesson which the noble Marquess had suggested. Beyond that, the system of M. Waddington in Tunis might have been wholly different from that which has been actually exhibited.

We next have before us the unfortunate career of a British subject—Mr. Levy—violently driven from one tribunal to another. All recollect the measures of the Bey against the Kroumirs, and the marches of the French against the Bey, which ended in the Treaty of Bardo, and the astonishing compulsion of the Regency to accept as First Minister the Consul-General of France, by whom the war had been promoted.

At this stage authentic knowledge ceases. The prudent combination of the Government has been—on Egypt slow and fragmentary light; on Tunis sudden and unmitigated darkness. We are only led, through journalists and travellers—particularly Mr. Wemyss Reid, to whom the best acknowledgments are owing—to believe that the French Protectorate was soon resented by a considerable body of insurgents; that Kerouan, the sacred city, has been occupied; that the Regency has been disturbed by intricate campaigns, by hard-fought battles, and by general confusion; and that the Bey—a virtual prisoner of France—has been compelled, ostensibly at least, to direct his arms and his resources against the loyal masses who were struggling to release him. It is only, too, through sources of that kind we are led to think that the origin of the war was investigated last December in a Parisian

court of justice, and, after great forensic efforts on both sides, was attributed by a jury, whom no power could abash, to the intrigues and follies of the late Consul-General.

Such may be regarded as a chain of events, if they are all confirmed—if none of them are fabulous. The conclusion they suggest, although they do no more, is that the true line of Great Britain would rather be to favour the departure of the French than sanction a Protectorate which detains their forces in the territory they have occupied.

I admit, again, that a conclusion of the kind is but suggested by the narrative in the possession of your Lordships. It requires more than such a narrative to vindicate it. However, it may be sustained by this consideration, the best despatch writers of France have ineffectually laboured to establish that Tunis does not enter into the Ottoman Empire. They urge that France has not acknowledged its dependence. They might there be checked, as France on various occasions, and all through the Crimean war, acknowledged its dependence. Let it be granted that she never did so. Have other nations recognised its independent nationality? They have not. The doctrine, therefore, is that dependence is annihilated if one State refuses to acknowledge it, while independence may subsist although a large majority of States refuse to acknowledge it. But recognition or acknowledgment is more essential to independence than dependence. The only escape is that when the voice of France is in one scale, and that of Christendom together with the Caliph in the other, the voice of France ought to preponderate, and that of Christendom together with the Caliph to give way.

Whether or not that ought to be so, the Foreign Office do at present hold that Tunis belongs to the Ottoman Empire, in the same way as Tripoli or Egypt or Bulgaria. The occupation is a blow, therefore, to the authority and prestige of the Sultan. Great Britain is perpetually seeking to control

or influence the Sultan. At this very hour she is doing so in the midst of a most critical occasion. To restore the credit of the Sultan, so far as the Tunisian occupation has impaired it, would be consistent with her language and auxiliary to her objects.

There is something else to be considered. According to official phraseology a French alliance ought to be guarded now as sedulously as it was before 1870. The principle is excellent. But when France occupies the territory of an Empire which we desire to maintain in its integrity, a strict alliance with her is not possible. If Governments attempted, national opinion would prohibit it. If no obstacle precluded it, all through the East it would be fatal to our objects.

But there is a far more grave consideration as to Egypt. I began by stating that the difficulties of Egypt and of Tunis were connected. It is here that the opinion ought to be supported. Until the subject is more thoroughly elucidated, the disastrous movement of Arabi Pasha can be ascribed to no more likely cause than to the spectacle which late events in Tunis have exhibited. It is a movement against the Egyptian status of the Western Powers, of which one has actively promoted the humiliation of the Sultan, the other silently acceded to it.

The events in Tunis, cold, preoccupied and distant as we are, have made on our minds a shadowy impression. How far more serious has the impression naturally been on the Mahometans of Africa, who recognise the spiritual power of the Caliph! How much more deeply than ourselves must they have felt the quick surrender of the pretexts by which the expedition was defended; the rapid war, without a declaration to commence it, against a Potentate whose absolute supremacy was first ironically blazoned; the indignities by which the Treaty was extorted; the grasping stipulations it included; the enforced subserviency of the Bey to a foreign,

hostile and encroaching Representative ; the accumulated miseries a neighbouring dependency has suffered !

But, my Lords, we are not left to any speculative argument. An Egyptian journal, cited in the papers now before us, has distinctly justified the movement on the ground that the population feared lest France should meditate in Egypt what in Tunis had already been effected. Mr. Blunt, who is a witness as to facts although he may not be an arbiter of policy, who is, besides an organ of the movement, a negotiator for the rebel, a few days back, in a letter to the *Times*, advanced the same interpretation. To what opinion can we come, except that the departure of the French from Tunis is among the first conditions of establishing tranquillity in Egypt ?

Let me now endeavour to review, with the permission of the House, the modes of prosecuting a result observed on these conclusive grounds to be desirable. It will hardly be brought about by the sole exertions of Her Majesty's Government. It is true they never gave their sanction to the war, except in absolute reliance on the good faith of the assurances that it was directed only to secure the frontier of Algeria against incursion from the Kroumirs. It is true they might consistently protest against continued occupation. But the language of the Government after the Treaty of Bardo will hardly sanction any hope of their activity in this way. The despatch of May 20th informed France that the Treaty of Bardo, and the proceedings which it crowned, had not made "a favourable impression" on our public ; but did not even venture to admit that the Government partook the feelings of the country it was acting for. No one who studies that despatch will rely upon the conduct of the Government as a means of extricating Tunis from the force which seems, at least, to be oppressing it. If Her Majesty's Government had influence to close the occupation, they would have had influence to guard against it.

Again, if they desired to close the occupation, they would not so long have left the struggle of France and Tunis in obscurity. It is the very line by which the action of the former is protected. The authorities of Italy, no doubt, have strong convictions that the French ought to withdraw. But, in spite of strong convictions, they have looked on from the beginning to this moment.

A great interpreter of Italy, Signor Gallenga, holds that she has not become a military nation. On that point he may be possibly mistaken. At least, Italy cannot, like France, look back to old traditions of success and many centuries of warfare. Italy might lend Great Britain important aid; but is not likely, by assuming an initiative, to direct or supersede her. The imaginary essence sometimes described as the European concert—a term unknown to former annals of diplomacy—will hardly form the agency desired.

Since the Crusades there never has been such a union. The existing Conference, indeed, may be thought to resemble one of the Crusades, since it has seized Constantinople, against the wishes of its ruler, as a basis of the further struggles which it meditates. I only mention that in passing. The real fact is, that Europe has in later times been always balanced and divided. Even in 1815, when a greater number of Powers were drawn into a league than at any other moment—they are all enumerated in the life of Mr. Herries, who acted as their subsidising patron—France (a large exception) was not included in the system. The concert now poetically fancied is not bound together by any treaty whatsoever, a fact last year discovered to your Lordships.

During the autumn the component parts have been in discord as to Egypt. It will be of no more value to deliver Tunis than it was of value to defend it. By these reflections, steadily pursued, we may be led to think that the influence of Germany is the only influence sufficient for the object. The

position of Germany at Metz, if nothing else, secures a *locus standi* with French counsels. If Germany resolved that the Tunisian occupation ought to cease, although it lingered on it would not be enduring. But as soon as an attempt is made to gain the influence of Germany, two objections are not unlikely to present themselves.

The expenditure of France in Africa has been regarded as a barrier to any other war she might attempt. It might thus appear to be a sacrifice on the part of Germany to put an end to the embarrassments of Tunis. This argument, no doubt, admits of being replied to. It is unfortunately strengthened by another. When, in 1879, Germany had withdrawn herself from Russia at great risk, the year after—1880—Great Britain lent herself to Russia by submitting to a Prime Minister who had lately been the ardent champion of that Empire, and by submitting to him, against all usages, the pledges and engagements which ought to have ensured a wholly different situation. An appeal to Germany would, therefore, be as unbecoming as it might be ineffectual. What alternative presents itself? To correct the Ministerial position by which Germany is well entitled to be alienated, and in regaining credit for ourselves to pave the way for the recovery of Tunis to the Sultan.

I move for an humble Address to the Crown for further correspondence on the affairs of Tunis.

March 19th, 1883.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS—POLICY OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT—TREATY OF 1879 BETWEEN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in calling attention to the Foreign Policy of Her Majesty's Government, and moving for a copy of the Treaty formed between Germany and Austria in 1879, said : My Lords,—Let me return my thanks to the noble and learned Earl upon the woolsack, who has withdrawn the notice which stood first upon the paper. He merits thanks, whatever reasons have directed him, since his notice might have led to the exclusion of other topics for the evening. It is superfluous to point out that this House ought sometimes to devote itself to foreign matters, as it has done in recent years with credit and advantage. It is clear that the best time for such a purpose is the interval between the first day of the Session and the Recess at Easter, when legislation makes no great demand upon your Lordships.

The debate on the Address gives no sufficient opportunity—if it gives any opportunity—of this kind. We have two ceremonial performances—a speech from the Opposition, a speech from the Government—when the House at once collapses, unless an amendment has been moved, which scarcely ever happens. Besides, foreign policy has no special title to discussion at that moment. It is only before the House in a congeries of topics. If this notice is a wide one, its intention is merely to give noble lords a choice of the

ground they may resolve to tread, which, at all events, is limited to the transactions of three years, all more or less conducing to the present state of Egypt. As to the Motion I conclude with, every one knows that the agreement between Germany and Austria has led to more discussion in the autumn which has passed than it did even soon after the celebrated journey of Prince Bismarck to Vienna, which is thought to have produced it.

With the permission of the House, I will go back a minute to the formation of the Government under its present head in 1880. I shall be cautious not to wound the sensibilities of those who are indebted to him for their offices or Peerages. It is only necessary to remark that his sudden elevation—no outcome of the General Election—when he had ceased for many years to be the leader of a Party—begot a certain antecedent probability as to the tenor of the foreign policy he influenced.

Men who recollect—perhaps with admiration, or, if you like it, with well-founded admiration—his pamphlet on Bulgaria, his movement at St. James's Hall, his speeches in January 1877, when war upon the Eastern Question was impending, those which followed at Midlothian—above all, his laudatory criticism of a Russian work intended to direct opinion in this country, must acknowledge that his unexpected advent to political supremacy had a tendency at least to stamp two characteristics on the direction of the Foreign Office. They had a tendency to stamp upon it undue antagonism with the Porte and frequent deference to Russia, by which grave difficulties might be possibly created. I propose to touch on one or two transactions—there have not been many—which may show how far that antecedent probability has been supported by events and verified in action. If it has, a practical conclusion may suggest itself, or I would not detain the House this evening.

The first conspicuous step was the recall of Sir Henry Layard from Constantinople. No doubt, as the noble Marquess who leads upon the other side once pointed out, every Government must exercise its judgment in the choice of representatives, as, indeed, it must do in the choice of legislative measures. But it does not follow that the judgment is correct. It does not follow that a bad and culpable decision may not arise in one sphere or the other. The motives for that recall may have been excellent and virtuous. They may have been free from all vindictive animosity. They may have had no reference to any previous differences between the First Minister and the Ambassador. The consequences, as may be quickly seen, have been deplorable. Sir Henry Layard had this particular advantage. Appointed by another Government, even if he went on serving under this one, in the eyes of the Sublime Porte he was not thoroughly identified with the implacable hostility the First Minister had shown to that Power. Whoever came directly from the Government inevitably was so. Sir Henry Layard was the only person who had any chance of influence at Stamboul, under a Government at home so thoroughly obnoxious to the leaders in that capital.

The Government destroyed a force for gaining its own objects they could not possibly replace by any force they might create—however good—because they had created it, because it was their offspring and their reflex. But the recall of Sir Henry Layard had another consequence, which has never yet been properly appreciated. It finally restored the arbitrary power of the Sultan. Sir Henry Layard was the convinced and zealous patron of the Ottoman Assemblies. Among his last despatches he insisted on them as the only safeguard against risks which were approaching. He would have had a prospect of restoring them after the fall the Russian war had brought upon them. He was acquainted

with their mechanism ; he had seen them at work, and he could dwell upon their action before the war and after it began down to the time the Russian army reached San Stefano. No one else could hold such language as was open to him. It would have been absurd for Mr. Goschen—although he was instructed in some manner—to attempt it. This untoward step restored to confidence and vigour the despotic system of the Palace and its labyrinth of influences. The triumph of the Softas, the fall of Abdul Aziz, the kind of revolution which had happened and been so favourable to our objects, were quite obliterated, or wholly thrown away, when Sir Henry Layard was compelled to turn his back upon Constantinople. But if the Government determined to fence round the arbitrary power of the Sultan—an extraordinary scheme for those who had a Liberal majority behind them—but one course remained : namely, to draw towards themselves such an important and necessary factor in our policy. Having rendered him omnipotent when he might have been restrained and counteracted, they were forced either to propitiate or lose him altogether.

Can it be said, my Lords, if we refer even in a perfunctory manner to the transactions which ensued, that there was any such conciliating effort ? The affair of Montenegro followed. No doubt the Prince of Montenegro was entitled, by the Treaty of Berlin, to certain acquisitions. It is true that great embarrassments arose from the revolt of the Albanians against the stipulated transfer : that many substitutions were invented for what the Treaty had laid down, and that a long time elapsed before the princely claim was satisfied. But we were not bound to interfere in any manner beyond the other signatories of the Treaty. The aggrandisement of Montenegro was ceded by the Treaty, as many other things were ceded, to the position of the Czar, the force of arms, the vestiges of conquest. It was not a British object to enforce

or to accelerate it. The gain, if any, was to Russia, who, in the Prince of Montenegro, sees a vassal and a pensioner. Russia may have been entitled to a leading and energetic part upon the subject. It was not so with Great Britain. She ought to have stood still, when another Power was quite sufficient for the difficulty. But the language which was held, the naval combination which was organised, the menace about Smyrna, without gaining to any great extent the Prince of Montenegro—if that had been desirable—were inevitably calculated to alienate the Sultan, whose power of reprisals the withdrawal of Sir Henry Layard had imprudently consolidated.

The case of Greece was stronger in the same direction. Greece had no title of any sort under the Treaty of Berlin. No acquisition was secured to her. The signatory Powers were engaged only to mediate between Greece and the Sublime Porte as to any change which they desired in their frontier. The Government were ready, by means of violence and arms, had other Powers concurred, to deprive the Sultan of his territory, to enforce an act of useless spoliation, to insist upon a frontier recommended by a Conference, indeed, but which that Conference had no authority to settle unless both parties acquiesced in it. To establish it, the Government were ready to make an unprovoked, unjust, unprofitable war upon the Sultan. It would have been unprovoked, as he had done nothing to their prejudice. It would have been unjust, as no ground for it existed. It would have been unprofitable, because the extension of Greek territory, although it may be an Hellenic, is not in any way a British object. It has been long ago established that to extend Greece does nothing for the permanent solution of the Eastern Question, and that a Greek *régime* at Constantinople would be useless to defend it. Greece, like any State, is perfectly entitled to look for acquisition by the ordinary methods, such as marriage,

which conferred Bohemia upon Austria ; such as purchase, which drew Louisiana to the United States ; such as conquest, which reunited Alsace and Lorraine with the German Empire. But that Great Britain should contemplate, by land or sea, a war for her aggrandisement, would be incredible unless the papers thoroughly disclosed it. Who ventures to deny that our conduct on this question was adapted to lead the Sultan—whom we had rendered more despotic—into new and well-founded resentment ?

The further system of the Government was to incite, to animate and to keep up a European concert, as they termed it, to direct him. It is true that Spain and Sweden were excluded from it. The European concert, having passed away, is not entitled to much notice. We need not trample on a spectre. Nothing of the kind had ever been invented since the concert which so long struggled to assert itself at Carlsbad, Troppau, Laybach and Verona. It may have arisen partly from the Congress of Berlin attempting to maintain itself in other shapes and modes after its business was accomplished. The principle on which a Congress sometimes endeavours to perpetuate itself admits of serious objection. The normal object of a Congress is to restore the balance of a power, when war has interrupted it, or been occasioned by its absence. It is so laid down, at least, among the Treaties of Vienna. But if a Congress which unites the great preponderance of European States resolves to be immortal, the balance of power can have no existence. The Congress defeats itself when it survives the temporary object which created it. I merely throw this out for the reflection of diplomatists. Whether it is just or not, there can be no doubt that the so-termed European concert was most obnoxious to the Empire against which it seemed to be arrayed, and that for a long time the Government exulted in the shibboleth.

At last the well-known mutinies of February and September

1881—for I have brought the House to Egypt—created so much apprehension that the Sultan—arbitrary sovereign as we had made him at Constantinople—became far more essential to us than he had been. On those events occurring it must have been seen at once that we might have to ask his military succour—as we did—and that the whole value of that succour would depend upon the mind and temper with which he looked upon Great Britain.

What course was taken to improve them? By what measures was it sought to calm the deep and bitter animosity so long and so elaborately kindled? He was ordered not to send even Commissioners to examine a disturbance in his Empire. When his Commissioners proceeded, adverse gun-boats counteracted them. The Dual Note—allowed to have been useless—was resolved on in defiance to his wishes. Against his protestation, French and British ships advanced to Egypt, to do no good to Europeans—their sole pretext—but to remain the idle and humiliated witnesses of massacre. Alexandria was bombarded, for no purpose which has ever been explained, against the judgment of the French, implied in their departure, to the dismay and horror of Mahometan society.

At last a Conference—against the usages of independent Powers—was forced upon his capital. The antagonism of the First Minister could not go much further. In the meantime there was a long course of retaliation from the Sultan. His measures were, in a high degree, precipitate and hostile. He thwarted us on every chance, on every occasion. He declined to send troops to Egypt on any acceptable basis. He gave a decoration to Arabi, which was utterly unwarrantable. He seemed to foster every movement with which Great Britain was contending. The fact is, he had a long course of outrage to excite, and no political Assemblies to control him. Her Majesty's

Government had administered the one, and been a fatal bar to the revival of the other. Your Lordships will remember they had organised the arbitrary power which they were unwilling to assuage, and, as it seems, unable to contend with.

The outcome is complete incompatibility between Her Majesty's Government and the suzerain of Egypt. It is avowed, however, that the state of Egypt is embarrassing. It is not necessary to establish it by details. The Government avow it in a manner pointed and emphatic. They avow it by withdrawing Lord Dufferin from Constantinople at the time when he is indispensable to the post which properly belongs to him. The accord of the Porte is seen to be desirable. A long despatch—unanswered still—is seeking to obtain it. It can hardly be obtained by a Chargé d'Affaires, who, according to the Law of Nations, is but accredited to the Minister, and has no access to the Sovereign. But still the pressure of embarrassment in Egypt is so urgent that—to bring Lord Dufferin to bear upon it—the British Embassy at Constantinople is virtually shut up when nearly all depends upon its action. The British Embassy at Constantinople is virtually shut up when the person who directs it, in times like these, has no sufficient *locus standi* to demand an audience of the Sultan. It cannot happen otherwise in the despotic system which the Government determined on reviving, when they withdrew the only person (Sir Henry Layard) qualified to alter it. To keep up tranquillity in Egypt there are but two agencies : one, cordial relations with the Sultan ; the other, a British garrison permanently settled in that country. Cordial relations with the Sultan have been, as I hold, wantonly destroyed—at all events entirely abandoned. The occupation, therefore, promises, or rather threatens, to be lasting. Some members of the Cabinet have pointed to the hazards of a lasting occupation. They are so great that even now

the subject has not been exhausted, and I should wish to add a few remarks upon it.

A lasting occupation is a strain on our military force in one direction, when Ireland is a strain upon it in another. We are not strong enough to bear it. Let noble lords read what General Sir Lintorn Simmons has lately written on the army.

Suppose, however, that by changes brought about we become stronger, and the objection ceases altogether. A lasting occupation in the Continental world would be regarded as possession. When Great Britain possesses Egypt, we know by the avowal of a former Czar that Russia will conceive a valid title to Constantinople to have come into existence. Some men have blindly reasoned or asserted that, so long as we are placed in Egypt, Constantinople is indifferent to us. They forget that a strong Power at Constantinople would make our garrison in Egypt utterly untenable. They forget, also, that we uphold Constantinople not only to secure a passage into India, but far more immediately in order to defend the Mediterranean from an adverse force, and Asia Minor from a conquering invasion. Who ever stood upon the Bosphorus without perceiving that the Mediterranean and Asia Minor may be equally commanded from it? The lasting occupation in Egypt, towards which we are inclining by the want of any hold upon its suzerain, tends to draw Russia across the Pruth, and make two Powers, at least, less vigilant in watching her.

Such is the effect in Egypt of the line into which foreign policy since 1880 has been driven. But it is worth while to estimate its tendency in different capitals, which the Egyptian difficulty renders more important to us than they would have been. In Constantinople—but that was rendered clear before—Great Britain is not listened to. Do you require an authority? A week ago, upon the 12th of March, the

Under Secretary, speaking for the Foreign Office, declared in "another place," that remonstrances addressed to the Sublime Porte about the Treaty of Berlin are wholly ineffectual. The catastrophe we always have to fear has come about: the Sultan appeals to Russia for protection against the conduct of Great Britain. It is affirmed by M. de Giers in the despatches now before us. What comes from him will not be lightly disregarded. In St. Petersburg the kind of Russian banner we hold up in the person of the First Lord of the Treasury gives strength to the party who are restless for the Treaty of San Stefano, and weakness to the party who are contented with the Treaty of Berlin. In Vienna we all know—as we were officially informed—in what manner our Ministerial position is regarded. In Berlin its effect may be more positively dangerous, although I would not speak with confidence upon a workshop of events so difficult to penetrate. In that capital the Seven Years' War must still be recollected, although with us it is forgotten. Its great lesson was that Austria, France and Russia may possibly unite against the House of Hohenzollern. In exact proportion as Great Britain proclaims her deference to Russia it is more hazardous for the German Empire to maintain a separation from her. The influence of Russia over Germany in its disjointed state was formerly supreme. If we look back to the accounts of travellers or residents in Germany some fifty years ago, they abound with illustrations of it. In the Crimean war it had not vanished, as recent memoirs have explained to us. Down to 1877 it still continued, or the war of that year would scarcely have been possible. In 1879 a new departure was inaugurated, and we are doing our utmost to reverse it. But if it is reversed, how long can you depend upon the safety of Constantinople?

It may be said that these are speculative arguments, and that the capitals referred to have not pronounced themselves

in such a sense as I ascribe to them. The answer is that they have done so. So far back as last May, when all the world, in common with ourselves, was under the impression of the tragical occurrences in Ireland, there was a chorus from the European press, anticipating the immediate downfall of Mr. Gladstone as a Minister. I have at home a chain of telegrams to prove it. On what ground was the result anticipated by nearly all the organs of the Continent, except the eager wish of many States for its arrival.

In the outset I adverted to a practical conclusion as not unlikely to suggest itself. It is idle to dilate on inconveniences without adverting to a remedy. I would not come down to the House or trespass on your Lordships for that purpose. The remedy is not, indeed, original. It requires neither meditation nor invention to produce it. It is the project of the First Minister himself. For six years he incessantly explained to us that if a Liberal majority was formed it ought not to be directed by himself, but by the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville) in this House, and by a noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) well known in the other. Whoever shares in that opinion, whoever fearlessly proclaims it, is but the organ of his judgment, although he may not be the minion of his power.

To return, however, strictly to the domain of foreign policy, it is seldom you are able to give it an augmented dignity or an improved direction, or more security and steadiness, upon terms so easy. It generally happens that to accomplish such results, some extraordinary armament, or some costly work, or some difficult alliance, or some adventurous decision is required of you. It now arises from the turn of history that to gain confidence in States where confidence is necessary, to inspire fear where fear is desirable, to win gratitude where gratitude is useful, and to encourage fortitude where fortitude

would aid you, you have only to take down from the façade or frontage of the Empire a human emblem which never should have been set up—if you believe the gifted personage who forms it.

To bring that end about we do not want the action of the Legislature, although it might be laudable and patriotic. We do not want the interference of the Crown, although principle and precedent would justify it. We only need the resolution of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the noble Marquess with whom he used to be associated. When they resolve to imitate the high-minded example of their whilom colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament the problem will adjust itself. It will be but a temporary sacrifice. It will only be the movement of a lifeboat. They will come back into the air of place after a rapid plunge into the sea of honour and integrity.

In my remarks upon the course which foreign policy has taken, I have not intended to deny that the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs may frequently have exercised a wholesome influence upon it. But for him Sir Henry Layard might have been replaced with far less judgment than he has been. But for him Smyrna might have actually been occupied. But for him we might have afterwards become in the defence of Greece the criminal invaders of the Sultan. But for him the European concert might have longer been prepared, in the Old World and the New, to overthrow the boundary of empires and to disturb the equanimity of sovereigns. But Secretaries of State were not invented to control and mitigate First Ministers.

In looking back to these events we see two mighty elements of force erroneously distributed. The balance which Europe deeply wants is found to work with energy in Downing Street. The concert which Downing Street imperatively asks for is suddenly exported to the Continent, although

it does not flourish in that region. Let me add that I have never for a moment censured the decision of the Government to go to war in Egypt by themselves rather than leave it to the perilous dominion of Arabi. It was the remark, however, of a philosopher in the last century that, when heroic virtue is required, it is usually to overcome the difficulties which wisdom might have previously averted. There is a *prima-facie* case against a Government which sends a warlike expedition. No doubt the laurels of a soldier are an impenetrable barrier to guard the nudity and weakness of a Minister. They ought at times to be withdrawn from what they shelter. They will not fade by such a process.

Before sitting down I wish to add another word about the Motion. It is not a merely formal one. The greatest possible importance ought to be attached to the concurrence in 1879 of Germany and Austria. The Holy Alliance which had reappeared was interrupted, possibly concluded by it. It is a landmark in the diplomatic history of the world. It is a germ from which the European balance may be gradually elicited. It revived a hope which had become almost extinct. It suddenly bestowed what reason and persuasion had laboured idly to appropriate. And if since 1880 we have done our utmost to subvert it, by indirectly driving Germany towards Russia, it now requires acknowledgment and tribute from your Lordships and the country. It is not irregular that we should have a Treaty between two independent Powers, which Great Britain never signed, or that of Unkiar Skelessi would not be before us. At the same time, should counsels in Berlin, which I have no pretension to interpret, withhold it from the light until a later period, I am the last person, upon many grounds, to urge the Motion on your Lordships.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell in reply said: I need not detain the House, as no answer has been given to the views

I brought before it, and as the noble Earl has not received the Treaty which I moved for. Whatever the noble Earl the Secretary of State may have expected, I have not endeavoured to "survey mankind from China to Peru"; but, on the contrary, have gone over a series of transactions all belonging to one region, all linked with one another, and all contributing to form the great Egyptian difficulty which engages us at present.

August 6th, 1883

SUEZ CANAL—CONCESSION TO M. DE LESSEPS.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the further correspondence upon Egypt, and to move for copies of the original concessions to M. de Lesseps on the Isthmus of Suez Canal, said : My Lords,—I came down to address the House a week ago upon this notice, when Her Majesty's Government referred to the absence of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as an objection to proceeding. We are now in August, and the unavoidable satiety of the House at such a moment imposes on me more compression than might otherwise have been necessary. At the same time, the reasons for discussions upon Egypt, and the rather burning question it has recently forced on us, have accumulated in the interval.

The world is full of novel contributions from well-known and independent writers on the subject. The opinions of M. Leon Say have been communicated to our public. This very day some new despatches have appeared, if they have not been yet delivered to your Lordships. The daily press of France and of Great Britain is still engrossed with the Canal. It is too late for Parliamentary Committees to discriminate and methodise the different propositions which are offered. The Government are engaged to the claim of M. de Lesseps, and cannot, of their own initiative, bring the matter under any scrutinising process. Unless in this House some advance is made towards a practical conclusion, the

Session would not close under the circumstances which the public are entitled to anticipate. The strongest ground of all for giving some consideration to the routes across the Isthmus at this moment is the great variety of schemes which may be rapidly enumerated. M. de Lesseps seems to favour a new and parallel canal. A diagonal canal from Alexandria, over the branches of the Nile, has been contemplated. A canal from Syria through the Dead Sea, with a different termination from that of Suez, has been suggested. Another project is to widen the existing channel. There is a fifth suggestion—that of Mr. Talbot, a member of the House of Commons, which appeared in a morning journal, to prevent confusion which exists, by devoting alternate days to the traffic from the Red Sea and the traffic from the Mediterranean. These schemes are all in need of accurate comparison.

My impression is that M. de Lesseps cannot form a new canal without a new concession on many grounds, and partly upon this one. The old concession specified the different stages he was bound to traverse, and does not give authority to traverse any others. It hardly seems desirable, however, that a new concession should be granted to him, as it would do little to advance the end of those who are dissatisfied at present. The insufficiency of any scheme to widen the Canal is known to naval men, and has been explained in the report of Admiral Ryder, which may be found in the work of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, the glowing, but not on that account inaccurate, historian of M. de Lesseps and his enterprise. Whether a canal can be formed independently of M. de Lesseps may be doubtful. Even if it can, Her Majesty's Government are not at liberty to sanction it. Committed as they are, they can only sanction a canal which would defeat the aim of further enterprise and outlay.

Before quitting the subject of the Canal, there is one reflection which late events might almost force upon us. It

is that, were Lord Palmerston surviving, he might now easily demand indulgence or acquittal for the course he had pursued in first opposing the design of M. de Lesseps. He might insist that, as to commerce, those immediately engaged in it proclaimed the inconvenience and inadequacy of the project ; that, setting wealth aside, the Canal had not at all contributed to the safety of the Indian Empire, or any military object ; that we had purchased largely to avert a risk which it involved ; that we had gone to war in order to defend it from a mutiny, and been led by that war into an occupation of the country dangerous to prolong while cholera is menacing our troops, difficult to terminate when anarchy may follow our departure. As the authority of Lord Palmerston in foreign policy is valuable, the reflection may not be a useless one. But even those who are inclined to recognise his former prudence on this subject may concur with the aggrieved interests and labour for a scheme by which their object would be realised. When it is remembered to how prodigal an outlay, to how crude a scheme the shipowners were an obstacle, they seem to be entitled to more than unsubstantial gratitude from Parliament and from the country.

No doubt the correspondence shows that Her Majesty's Government were assailed by an extraordinary pressure, that a well-known member of this House we do not often see among us (Lord Napier and Ettrick) was its organ, and that the project of a new canal could hardly be avoided. But it shows also that the secret of that pressure was the desire of the shipowners to be released from the ascendancy M. de Lesseps had established. In what manner Her Majesty's Government were led to think that they would satisfy the movement by a plan to double the ascendancy complained of, and to restore in Egypt the specific influence which the war had recently diminished, is a mystery the correspondence leaves for other sources to dispose of.

My Lords, no one who engages to call attention to the further correspondence upon Egypt can entirely pass over the despatch of February 6th from the noble Lord the Ambassador at Constantinople. The labour it involved would be a title to our notice. Of all his varied and exhaustive details as to the improvement of the country, what has fallen from the noble Lord on irrigation may now appear to have the greatest practical importance. According to the noble Lord, immeasurable wealth may be reclaimed by such a fertilising process. He uses language which, were it not in a despatch—to guarantee its accuracy and exactness—might seem to border on the realm of poetry and fancy. The Nile, he thinks, in its effects has more than equalled the Pactolus. Were irrigation organised more thoroughly, he teaches us that deserts might be transformed into gardens, and wealth derive an impulse which would bring down the actual debt to utter insignificance. As irrigation turns a good deal on the system of canals adopted, the opinion of the noble Lord may tend to guide the country as to the new mode of joining the two seas which it is most desirable to favour. With regard to the organic projects of the noble Lord, his Local Councils, General Assembly, Governments restricted to eight members, there may be little to object to them. They are marked by an aversion to sudden, violent, exotic innovations in an Oriental country. They are marked by much consideration for the welfare of the masses and the remedy of evils which had before been noted by such travellers as Baron Malortie, Mr. Leon Say, Mr. Nassau Senior. Whether such projects could be realised without a lasting occupation is a question to be seriously canvassed. Indeed, my Lords, the most important passage of the correspondence, if I am not deceived, relates to the occupation of the country. The noble Lord was gravely urged, so far as he was able, to extend it. He was urged in that sense by a body of merchants and by a body of

missionaries whose opinions he reported. It appears that his instructions were prohibitory of all hope upon the subject. It appears, likewise, that his own mode of thinking was opposed to that of his petitioners.

I admit now having contended before Easter that there are many grounds on which a lasting occupation ought to be avoided. On this point, or rather on the question of permanently holding Egypt, the judgment of Lord Palmerston was a most decisive one. Although no one was less inclined to acquiesce in the supremacy of other Powers in that region, although no one laboured more assiduously against movements to detach it from the Ottoman Empire over a long and agitated period, which closed in 1841, Lord Palmerston, as his private correspondence has revealed to us, was thoroughly opposed to British tenure of that country. He regarded Egypt only as a means of transit for Great Britain, and held that we had no more reason to be proprietors within it than a traveller from Edinburgh to London would have for buying the hotels which might be useful on his journey. But even if Lord Palmerston was silent, the inconveniences of lasting occupation would not be less manifest. As the noble Lord the Ambassador at Constantinople has justly pointed out, it would be a burden to the treasury of Egypt. It is felt as a blow to the dignity of the Ottoman Empire, and thus renders it still more averse to any counsel we may offer. It must beget in Russia endless aspiration to some dominion on the Bosphorus, of which, according to her view, the price has been surrendered when Egypt falls under Great Britain. By withdrawing so large a force it does not lessen the anxiety which Ireland habitually occasions. It prolongs the animosity of France, which the decision to avoid the terms of M. de Lesseps must in some degree have kindled. It renders it more difficult to address to France the least remonstrance on the Tunisian Protectorate, or any other subject which arises.

But there is something else to be considered. We learn, if not from the Blue-books, from many other sources, that the Vice-regal power has been a good deal undermined; that movements may spring up as grave as that which drew us into Egypt; that the actual Khedive, though irreproachable to us, has not sufficient power to defend himself against intrigues which may occur. It does not seem to be a groundless calculation that when the British garrison withdraws the Sultan will retain a kind of balance in the country between the forces which divide it. It is now historically clear that he might have done much more to control the movement of Arabi. But we cannot possibly depend on the co-operation of the Sultan—it is in no spirit of invective that I allude to such a circumstance—until the British Government has ceased to be identified with the actual First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Gladstone). Whether the Sultan looks back to his language before the General Election, or to his conduct since that period, he must regard the First Lord of the Treasury as an implacable opponent. It is well known to your Lordships, and it is well known to me, that the Sultan does regard him as an implacable opponent. The conclusion is that either the garrison must stay in spite of many risks and disadvantages connected with it, or that the First Lord of the Treasury must soon withdraw from the position which he occupies. Which of these two alternatives is more to be desired would hardly be a question to enlarge upon on such a notice as the present, since it embraces points of foreign and domestic policy which lie beyond the correspondence upon Egypt. The Motion before the House is one Her Majesty's Government can scarcely hesitate in granting. The original concessions, in the form of a Return, have been presented to the other House of Parliament. They are essential to a just opinion on a controversy so very far from being exhausted. They may be seen in the volumes of Mr. Percy Fitzgerald; but these

are not accessible to every one. They are the only means of ascertaining how far M. de Lesseps is entitled to form a new Canal, or how far the Khedive is at liberty to do so.

After the debate,

Lord Stratheden and Campbell, in reply, said that perhaps the noble Earl the Secretary of State would inform the House where the original concessions had been brought before their Lordships. [Earl Granville was understood to say No. 6.] If that was the case, he (Lord Stratheden and Campbell) would withdraw the Motion. He must remark, however, that he had by no means held out the disappearance of the First Minister from his actual post as a universal panacea. He had only pointed out that until it happened it would not be possible to take away the garrison from Egypt, while to retain it led to evils of a grave and serious description.

April 4th, 1884.

REUNION OF AUSTRIA, GERMANY AND RUSSIA.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising, according to notice, to call attention to the effect produced by the visit of the First Minister to Copenhagen ; and to move for diplomatic correspondence on the alleged reunion of Austria, Germany and Russia, said :—

My Lords,—As a noble Earl and a noble Baron have already drawn the attention of the House to foreign policy, I may be allowed, perhaps, to bring forward a notice in the same sphere, although I would not do so at this hour unless your Lordships were on the verge of separation for a period, while there is no further business coming on this evening.

The notice does not refer merely to the visit of the First Minister to Copenhagen, or the impression it produced, but also to an occurrence of considerable magnitude in Europe which seems to have a place among its consequences. It demands further information on the alleged reunion of Austria, Germany and Russia. Unless the inspired press of Berlin and St. Petersburg, together with a royal speech at one, mislead the world—there is no reason they should do so—that reunion has been formed, although it may not have reached the shape of any new convention. Before it gains maturity of that kind is the fittest season to consider it.

It cannot be forgotten that the system only closed in 1879

by the remarkable decision of Prince Bismarck at Vienna. Well might the Foreign Office have exulted at that moment ! But the revival of the system was inevitable, unless Germany and Austria were assiduously encouraged in their new direction by Great Britain. It always tends to reappear, because it is supported by a Treaty still on record ; because habit, which, according to the late Duke of Wellington, is far more powerful than nature, governs States as well as individuals ; and because the skilful, subtle, nearly irresistible diplomacy of Russia often toils to re-establish it. But Germany and Austria have been assiduously discouraged in the path they had resolved on : first by the startling appointment of Mr. Gladstone as First Minister, when he had ceased for years to be the leader of a party ; then by the course which policy has taken under his dictation ; and, last of all, by his appearance at Copenhagen, which, although it must engage the faithful advocacy of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville), has not on that account been less a disturbing influence in Europe.

My Lords, the noble Earl is bound by every expedient to defend it. If he is well aware that, after the impression which has followed it, it cannot be seriously vindicated, he is bound by a well-acted levity to gloss it over. Unless I am mistaken, it is laid down in the very book of rhetoric or logic to which the noble Earl referred on one occasion, by the celebrated Hamilton, that you are always to oppose the grave by the ridiculous. The noble Earl is under a stringent obligation to uphold his colleague and to follow his preceptor. Notwithstanding that, on March 1st he admitted everything which I was anxious to elicit. He admitted that the First Minister had met the Emperor of Russia ; he admitted that there were no instructions of any kind whatever from the Foreign Office.

If the First Minister had never met the Emperor of Russia,

the subject would have dropped ; if he had received instructions from the Foreign Office, his case would have been sheltered. To say that a First Minister can never act in our day as a negotiator would be extravagant, when it is only a few years since, in that character, Lord Beaconsfield obtained his strongest title to the admiration of posterity. A First Minister may act as a negotiator ; but is not at liberty, when without a mission of any kind, to diffuse a false impression as to the alliances and objects of the country. This is the precise charge to which the First Minister is open, and this charge the noble Earl entirely misconceived in his laudable impatience to defend the Foreign Office. Unintentionally if you like, thoughtlessly it may be, without the least design, one readily admits it, the First Minister gave further currency to the already prevalent opinion that Russia and Great Britain aimed at partnership in Europe. That this effect has been produced, I shall be able to establish. It needs some references ; but as, on principle, I hardly ever read an extract to the House, when it is essential to maintain a proposition perhaps they may forgive it.

The *New Free Press* of Vienna spoke of the trip as "a demonstration of political importance." According to the correspondent of the *Times* in Vienna, the journals of that capital designated the interview of Mr. Gladstone with the Czar "as a move against the policy of Prince Bismarck, and as a confederacy of England with Russia and France." I will add no more as to Vienna. The House will recollect to what extent the irregular return of Mr. Gladstone as First Minister was seen in public correspondence of 1880 to estrange the Austrian Empire. They will ask themselves, was it desirable still further to embitter it? If any one has had occasion to be recently in Austria, he must know that there—wisely or unwisely—antagonism to Russia was never more decided than during the last autumn, and that the proceedings at

Copenhagen could not but have been obnoxious both at Vienna and Buda-Pesth. Let us see the kind of influence the step created over Russia.

According to the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*,—

“The Congress of Princes and statesmen assembled round King Christian, to which the First Minister attached himself, represented hundreds of millions of people, and might sooner or later revenge Denmark upon Germany.”

The *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* is an official paper. It considers the assemblage as a Congress, and the First Minister as having joined it.

The *Nord*, well known as a Russian organ in the west of Europe, contended,—

“That even if the voyage of Mr. Gladstone was undertaken without any political design, the visit of the Emperor of Russia to a statesman who plays so considerable a part in the government of England cannot be a matter of indifference.”

The noble Earl the Secretary of State is probably the only person to whom it ever did appear one. The *Novoye Vermya* said that,—

“Coming as it did after the recent journeys and interviews of monarchs, the visit of Mr. Gladstone to Denmark pointed to a possible alliance of England and Russia.”

Can it be doubted that all over Russia such an alliance was considered as proclaimed with greater emphasis than hitherto it had been?

As to Constantinople, the correspondent of the *Times* informed us that—

“The interview of Mr. Gladstone with the Czar had created a marked impression, and was regarded as a most significant proceeding.”

However, I admit that, in Constantinople, the effect was less

important, because there, already, the First Minister, on grounds well known to the House, was viewed in such a manner, that no new sentiment of hatred or repugnance could have well arisen.

In Paris, the *Temps*, by far the most enlightened organ of that capital in everything international, augured from the proceeding "the growth of an alliance between England, France and Russia." I have now only to advert to comments at Berlin, or in the German Empire.

The *Kreuz Zeitung* observes that—

"The event appears to strengthen the views of those who consider the stay of the Czar at Copenhagen as a counter-demonstration to the meetings of the Princes in Berlin and Vienna ;"

and concludes that—

"Mr. Gladstone probably considers the time favourable for making a bargain with Russia, giving her freer action in order to obtain freer action for himself."

Was it ever desirable to scatter this impression over Germany?

The *Post* says—

"Mr. Gladstone is the imitator of the most energetic statesman of our times ; because, like him, he goes in person where he wishes to apply the lever."

It was not doubted that the lever formed a part of his equipment.

The *Berlin Tageblatt* remarked that—

"The political importance of the Copenhagen visit of the Russophile British Premier seems to have been detected much earlier in Berlin than Vienna."

However that may be, its effect in Berlin was not a rapidly subsiding one. Having been there in November, I assert with confidence that, in political society, it continued to enhance resentment which had long indeed existed. Of course I cannot give any authority. The noble Earl the

Secretary of State may contradict me if he likes. The House will judge between us. But the safest method of arriving at a correct opinion on the effect produced is to glance at the transaction in the light which subsequent events appear to throw upon it.

The incidents which followed are well known to your Lordships. They consist in the strenuous activity of M. de Giers at Berlin and Vienna; the advance of Russia upon Merv, which has been so ably discussed a few weeks back; and the revival of what is often termed the Holy Alliance, according to the information we possess, according to the estimate which every diplomatist would form of what is probable, when Austria and Germany have reason to believe that the British Government has formed, or rather strengthened and screwed up a previously existing resolution to abandon them.

There is no doubt of the effect being bad; but is the First Minister responsible for the bad effect which was created? He is responsible; because, although he may not have known the Emperor of Russia to be at Copenhagen—when all the world could tell him—although he may have been forced to meet the Emperor of Russia on arriving—he was not compelled to make the speech which could not but resound—as I have shown the House it did, in many places. He is responsible; because, through the medium of the noble Earl, the Foreign Office thoroughly repudiate him.

The occurrence must also be viewed in connection with the antecedents which belong to it. If, soon after the Crimean war, Lord Palmerston had met the Czar in the same manner, he might have been unblamed, and possibly applauded. Europe would not have been misled by the proceeding. It would have been viewed, not as the concert of allies, but the decorum of opponents. What was the position of the right hon. gentleman? Out of office, he had been the flatterer—

although, no doubt, the conscientious, the unbought, and the disinterested flatterer—of Russia. He had laboured to identify pro-Russian zeal with Liberal opinion. He had done his utmost to detach the party which he used to lead from their traditional ground and their traditional sentiment as to Russia. He had been a powerful incentive of the war in 1877. Bursting into power by a method previously unknown, he had advanced men who did their utmost to bring the Russian armies to Constantinople. He had withdrawn Sir Henry Layard from that capital. He had gratuitously toiled for Montenegro. In every shape he had denounced the Ottoman Empire, and made himself obnoxious to the Sultan. In him, the outward show of deference to Russia was regarded not as a form, but a reality; not as an exception, but a climax. He did, what he was bound over to avoid, by special dictates of propriety and prudence.

When columns, which have long been marching and manœuvring in one direction, unite at last, the effect is not the same as when armies recently opposed, during a passing truce, exchange the courtesies of warfare. What is the defence? That it was merely inadvertency, or ignorance, or heedlessness which guided him. The defence sums up the accusation in a more emphatic form than it could otherwise assume.

Your Lordships may observe a rather curious gradation among important personages at this moment. M. de Giers, impelled by thought and swayed by calculation, superior to rest and eager for activity, is moving indefatigably to advance the interests of Russia. He never reaches congresses by accident, and is not blown to harbours it is a duty to avoid. The noble Earl remains at home, which is not culpable on his part, since, not having one ally in his character of Foreign Secretary, as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports he is bound to guard the coast from every possible invader. The First

Minister embarks on voyages—as his friends assure us—without political design or geographical direction, by which every capital is alienated it was most important to conciliate, and every scheme advanced it was most essential to retard and to discourage.

I quit that subject, and wish only to reply, if it is possible, to those who ask, Why should the union of Austria, Prussia, and Russia be sedulously deprecated, when the sovereigns who guide them are so entirely irreproachable? By looking back we gain the admonition which is needed. Long before the name of the Holy Alliance was invented the union of those Powers was directed against a reformed, reconstituted Poland, which had just deserved the homage of surrounding countries, as Mr. Burke and others thought, by hitting on the path of order and improvement which France, in 1879, was seen to be incapable of finding. For a long period this action was forgotten in the vicissitudes and struggles which had the First Napoleon for their centre. But the same union was found, in 1815, to thwart the most enlightened aspirations in the Congress of Vienna, to oppose the British Representative in all his best designs, to annex Genoa and Norway without consideration of their wishes; to seal the fate of Poland more profoundly, and, on the plea of guarding against the danger which had passed, to leave the world defenceless against the new one which succeeded.

Equipped with its well-known title in September 1815, in the name of the Trinity it struggled many years against the birth of freedom, however moderate and guarded, in Italy, in Spain, and South America. Although reduced by Mr. Canning, and counteracted by Lord Palmerston, it still accumulated in the world the revolutionary spirit which broke out in 1848, and nearly devastated Europe.

After a long interval, the war of France and Germany in 1870 seems to have recalled it. In its last phase it brought

about the drama with the surprising turns of which this House was occupied too frequently : the drama which, after a long series of commercial treaties, Herzegovinian insurrections, Servian wars, Bulgarian disturbances—all well adapted to delude the simple—at length revealed its purpose when the Ottoman Assemblies were overthrown at San Stefano.

But, even if the past career of such a union were less sinister than it is, it would be easy to observe the British objects which it tends to frustrate at this moment. However, I will pass them over altogether, as some may deem them unimportant, some even pernicious ; and it is difficult to fix a general consent on any line of active policy submitted. But something else ought not to be passed over. It is a reference to the immediate, urgent dangers to be traced to the reunion which presents itself. Let me refer to what was lately heard on Central Asia. Whatever eloquence or wit is brought to bear upon the question of Herat and Merv, whatever adjectives are coined to throw a doubt on their importance, whatever animated conflicts between the shadows of departed Viceroys, meeting in the Elysian fields of Parliament, may grow out of this subject, a few distinct conclusions are inevitable.

Herat is the gate of India. Lord Lawrence and Sir Henry Rawlinson, belonging to rival schools, have equally affirmed it. Merv, occupied by Russia, does make Herat much more accessible than formerly. It is a military problem. It has been decided by General Valentine Baker, whose credit is so high, and by Sir Charles M'Gregor, a Quartermaster-General in the Indian Service. Herat has now become the nearest stage of Russian progress unarrived at. Is it not certain that Russia is more likely to approach it when Germany and Austria have ceased to be a counteracting influence than when they are remaining one ?

Constantinople is always difficult to shelter. The First

Napoleon, it is related by O'Meara in the *Voice from St. Helena*, deemed it almost impossible for Europe to maintain it against Russia, although he thought the effort both desirable and necessary. When Germany and Austria are won over to the Russian scale, nothing remains except the Western Powers and the Ottoman Empire. If the Western Powers are disunited or disabled, the Ottoman Empire is alone, with Greece on one flank, Russia on the other ; while there are three routes to guard—that of the Pruth, that of the Black Sea, and that of Asia Minor. Can it be doubted that the new Alliance adds to the perennial solicitude of which Constantinople is the object?

But now the care of Parliament devotes itself exclusively to Egypt. We have seen to-day the agitation which it causes. I have not joined in the tide of general attack to which the Government have been exposed. It seemed to me that they were fully justified in their resistance to Arabi. I recognise the military lustre which the campaign against him added to our history. The Government may well defend themselves against those who aim at a Protectorate, and still more easily against those who urge a premature removal of the garrison. But still the situation is one full of danger and hazard. General Gordon has apparently been sent for no end except to register the triumphs of the Mahdi. His action is inappreciable, his fate is constantly precarious, his schemes are not adopted by the Government. Admitting that they have well secured the littoral of the Red Sea, the Government have no decided hold on Alexandria and Cairo. The Sultan does not join or approve the occupation. France looks on it with jealousy. It is not based upon a mandate. If the new Alliance, backed by the Ottoman Empire; or speaking in its name, of which they know how to avail themselves, dictated our withdrawal, in what manner would the Government be ready to encounter the dictation? It would be quite in accord with the principle

which Russia formerly avowed—that whatever Great Britain gained upon the Nile, she was to have as much upon the Bosphorus.

But there is something yet more serious to be remembered by your Lordships. The right hon. gentleman the First Minister and the noble Earl the Secretary of State are so placed that they can hardly grapple with the new Alliance by either of the methods which in former times have been resorted to against it. Mr. Canning, in the period between 1822 and 1827, was able to divide it. The memorials his private secretary has collected throw a searching light upon his policy. No doubt arguments might be employed for detaching Germany from Russia. Before now they have been methodised or given. Unless such considerations could be urged or could suggest themselves, the event of 1879 would never have arisen. Such reasons may be found; but it is not open to the Government to use them. They are not able to warn Germany against a concert of which they have themselves been guilty in a measure so extravagant. Rebuke, recrimination without limit, might, although we cannot say it would, be heaped upon them. The name of Mr. Gladstone might, although we cannot say it would, be conjured to repel, and that of Copenhagen to overwhelm them with confusion.

The other method of resisting the three Powers was the method of Lord Palmerston. His correspondence thoroughly elucidates it. We know, from his own words, that he framed his Quadruple Alliance of France, Great Britain, Spain and Portugal, not only to compose the wars which raged in the Iberian Peninsula, but also to balance, in some degree, the united force of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. How can the Government aspire to an equivalent of such a Quadruple Alliance, when France is hopelessly estranged, or would exact the condominium in Egypt they have just removed, as the least and first condition of her friendship?

My Lords, the conclusion is—and it would be idle to detain the House without adverting to it—that foreign policy requires, both in the First Minister and the Secretary of State, a different agency from that which governs it at present. The agency which, in 1870 and the years which followed, was inadequate to avert a dangerous war, to resist an arrogant pretension, to close a standing controversy with advantage, has now become still more inadequate to neutralise the special difficulty which its weakness has created. It is not by such an agency that you can bring before the world, even reduced and shaded into diplomatic phrase, the language which it calls for.

To resume the circumstances I have urged upon your Lordships. The visit to Copenhagen, although free from all political design, although ingenuous in spirit, amiable in purpose, was construed as a more emphatic mode of proclaiming the close relation between Russia and Great Britain. It has been followed by a singular, but natural development of consequences. A further stage is reached in Central Asia. The situation in Egypt is more serious than ever. The Holy Alliance reasserts itself. The First Minister and the Secretary of State are so placed that, with their best exertions, they cannot possibly withstand or counterbalance it. The revival of British influence at Berlin, at Vienna, at Constantinople, is the specific to be aimed at. To that revival they are both insuperable obstacles.

Does the Liberal majority require them? In a former generation the Liberal majority outlived even the services of the late Earl Grey and of Lord Althorp. It went on for years under a new, although it could not be under a superior direction. The Liberal majority is not, in any manner, the foundation on which the right hon. gentleman and noble Earl are standing at this moment. Who made the right hon. gentleman First Minister? The noble Earl, because

his diffidence would not allow him to become one, when he was the formally accepted leader of the party which had triumphed at the General Election. Who made the noble Earl the Foreign Secretary? The First Minister. It was the only voice in the United Kingdom which selected him. Externally, at least, the country is imperilled and degraded by two statesmen, each of whom depends exclusively upon the appointment of the other. The House of Commons having frequently rebuked it, it would be well for such a combination to exhaust itself before it yields to civil war or to incendiary violence—the civil war which the First Minister foreshadowed, the incendiary violence he is not able to suppress.

I have but a word to add upon the Motion. If, indeed, the noble Earl the Secretary of State declares, in stereotyped phrase, that he has no official knowledge on the subject, it is easy to believe him. The age is led to think that many things exist, and many are preparing, which official knowledge does not grasp within its circle. The official knowledge of the noble Earl instructed him, in 1870, to count on the tranquillity of Europe. It may instruct him now to hold that Germany and Austria have not resumed their old connection with the Northern Power, in spite of the elaborate contrivances and improvised adventures by which he and the First Minister have lured them back to such a system. But this House would not perform its duty to the world unless, before adjourning, it took the only method open to bring more light to bear upon an ominous—although far from an astonishing—appearance, which lends a graver hue to the embarrassed prospects of the country.

The noble Lord concluded by making the Motion of which he had given notice.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell, in reply, said : I need not

detain the House but for a moment. As to any personal reflection which has fallen from the noble Earl, it is easy to forgive while he is the compulsory organ of the First Minister, who is not here this evening to defend himself. The noble Earl has not contested a single proposition I have offered to your Lordships. Abandoning the First Minister where he is a subject of remark, where no charge is made he goes on pertinaciously excusing him. As to correspondence, the noble Earl may be entitled to withhold that which the three Powers have had amongst each other. That he has none to offer of his own, the line of observation I pursued would force me to anticipate. On the other hand, the House and country will remark that the union of the three Powers is now much clearer than before, the noble Earl having said nothing to throw a doubt upon or question its existence.

March 26th, 1885.

GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the meeting of the three Emperors at Skierniewice, in September 1884; and move an humble Address to the Crown for any diplomatic correspondence which exists from Her Majesty's Representatives abroad as to the new concert or alliance between the Courts of Germany, of Austria, and of Russia, said :

My Lords,—It will not, I think, be difficult to show that the notice I have given, although going back to an occurrence of the autumn, bears upon the difficulties which cause anxiety at present. But noble lords may first inquire where is Skierniewice? It is certainly among the places on which geography is rather mute, till history has discovered them. Who ever heard of Königgratz before 1866? Who knew anything of Sedan before 1870, except as a town where a peculiar kind of chair was manufactured or invented? It is difficult to find Skierniewice on actual maps. It will be easy upon future ones. It appears to be distant about an hour and a half by railway from Warsaw, on the southern journey to Cracow and to Vienna.

My Lords, the Conference at Skierniewice was not the first event which intimated the reunion of Austria, Germany, and Russia. Last year the Royal Speech at Berlin partially acknowledged it. On April 4th, when the subject was referred to in this House, the noble Earl the Secretary of

State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville) declined to question its existence. What took place at Skierniewice gave it a degree of form, of pomp and of publicity which had not previously existed. It also showed, by vivid details I pass over for compression, that Russia was the power to direct, as she has often been the power to achieve, this kind of combination. The three Ministers of the respective States assisted, and had long interviews together. The Chancellor of the German Empire, who is never present at unmeaning ceremonials, by joining it himself declared its substance and reality. The choice of the locality in Poland was not insignificant. These facts will hardly be disputed or viewed differently; but it may still be asked on what account an open, an accentuated union of the kind, ought to be regarded with extraordinary interest?

It cannot be denied, of course, that these august personages are entitled to assemble when and where they may think proper. It may be granted that each, regarded as an individual, has special titles to regard, sympathy or approbation in Great Britain. It is true also that domestic circumstances and traditionaly habits explain a disposition upon their part to recall from time to time the Treaty of September 14th, 1815, by which their brotherhood was constituted. But there are important grounds on which their formally avowed reunion always tends to apprehension among men who reason closely as to international affairs.

The system has been invariably hostile to the objects of Great Britain. If it were not, why should Mr. Canning, when acting for Lord Liverpool and the Conservatives from 1822 to 1827, have been immersed in struggles to resist it? If it were not, why should Lord Palmerston, when acting for the Liberals from 1830 to 1841, have been in no less animated and perpetual collision with it? Whatever page you open of their correspondence is nearly certain to betray the attitude I

have referred to. But, going beyond the range of our interests, the system involves too vast a preponderance of military power to be consistent with the general security. These Empires united can maintain 1,500,000 men, at least, for any object they determine on. Their fleets are far from inconsiderable : they are reckoned to include seventy-seven iron-plated vessels. I have before remarked that the union has been generally brought about by Russia for her objects. It owed its birth to Catherine II. It was reorganised in 1815 by Alexander I. and Madame Krudener. The "Life of Madame Krudener," by Capefigue, explains the subject with authority and detail.

Although I will not recall the history of the system, as I did last year, two illustrations which belong to our time may be remembered. In 1847, against the vehement remonstrances of other Powers, it annihilated the independence of Cracow, which dated from the Congress of Vienna. In 1877 it culminated in the late invasion of the Ottoman Empire, the fall of its Assemblies, and the revival of the arbitrary power which weighs upon it at this moment. The union will be always dangerous to Sweden on the one side, to the Porte upon the other. Its effect inevitably is to create a distance between Great Britain and the German Empire. The German Empire cannot lean at once to Russia and Great Britain, even if the latter Powers are drawn together by the momentary ardour of a Government. Governments are variable ; nations go back to their orbit. But when Germany and Great Britain are estranged, the latter is left alone and unsupported to contend with France in a variety of quarters. The France of M. Jules Ferry may be irreproachable ; but who can guarantee the coming form or future disposition of that country ? These may be mentioned as the standing inconveniences of the alliance now in question. But noble lords who have been in the Consular or Diplomatic

Service of the Crown may be aware of many which escape me.

It is, however, even more important to consider the results or consequences which have followed the revival of this memorable system since the beginning of last year, when it became visible on the horizon. Russia has advanced to Merv, and, later on, to Sarakhs. Herat is seriously threatened. There is no doubt whatever that the posts retained are within the Afghan frontier. The possibility of having to defend Afghanistan by arms has now become the daily topic of the journalist. A world of controversy between Great Britain and Germany, which did not formerly exist, has sprung into activity. The Chancellor of the German Empire has felt bound, in the Assembly at Berlin, to reprimand the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office, to say nothing of elaborate apologies in this House, has deemed it proper to send written explanations to the House of Commons. A Treaty with Portugal about the Congo has been abandoned, because too many Powers determined to oppose it. A Conference in London was dispersed, because it was in vain endeavoured to render it subordinate to any object of Great Britain. These are the fruits which, within a twelvemonth, the new alliance seems to have created.

It is therefore a vital matter to consider in what manner it originated. I rely on the indulgence of the House while dwelling for a moment on this topic. It is beyond my power to do it justice. It must be remembered that in 1879, under the direction of Prince Bismarck, the alliance vanished altogether. Well might enlightened politicians of that time have exclaimed that fate bestowed what hope could scarcely realise or dream of! In 1880 the dreaded union was remote. Germany and Austria were both emancipated from the influence of Russia. What happened to revive it?

My Lords, if I touch upon domestic incidents, it is only

because some of them have been a potent factor in European history, and are thus immediately connected with the notice I have given. The General Election overthrew Lord Beaconsfield. A Liberal majority was formed, of which the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Earl Granville) and a noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington), who for six years had acted with him in the House of Commons, were the accepted and indisputable leaders. The two were not identified with Russia in any marked degree, although it would be incorrect to say that they had shown peculiar vigilance in watching her encroachments. It is, however, true that when a great occasion took place at St. James's Hall in 1876 to form a Russian party they were both conspicuously absent. There was nothing, on the whole, to prevent a strict co-operation upon their part with the line which Germany and Austria had adopted. It was essential to the foreign policy of the United Kingdom that they should, according to the programme held out for upwards of five years when Lord Beaconsfield retired, themselves fill up the vacancy created.

What followed? To the dismay of Europe beyond the Russian frontier, in oblivion of engagements and of usages, with no political necessity or popular demand to justify so violent a measure, the noble Earl and noble Marquess took upon themselves to reinstate the leader who had abdicated for them. I mention it historically, and not in any spirit of invective. But that distinguished person had become the open and indefatigable advocate of Russia over a series of events well known to your Lordships. In the March of 1880 he had more signally proclaimed his allegiance. He was forced by the two noble Lords, who had the whole position in their hands, into what many felt to be disastrous, but what all saw to be at least uncalled for and unnecessary, eminence. Let me remind the House in what manner a new Holy Alliance inevitably followed so astonishing an incident.

My Lords, when in 1879 the authorities at Berlin broke up the Alliance of the Three Powers, which had maintained itself since 1870, without secret or official knowledge we may see that they did so at no little hazard, at no inconsiderable sacrifice. Ever since the death of the Czarina Elizabeth, which gave its last turn to the Seven Years' War, Russia has perpetually aimed at influence at Berlin. Military orders have been lavished, favours have been multiplied, diplomacy has been exhausted to obtain it. Beyond that, the two capitals, although separate a thousand miles, from no great centre intervening, seem to be next door to one another. There is a steady flow of thought and intercourse between them. Ties of blood have interwoven the two dynasties. The Czar Nicholas alluded to them with solemnity and even pathos on his deathbed. The two Powers have been intimately blended by the struggle with the First Napoleon. The fall of Poland has increased their solidarity. In 1870 Russia was thought to have placed German arms under important obligations. It is, of course, remembered that she was once a formidable enemy of Prussia. In spite of all these weighty and alluring grounds for permanent connection, in 1879 a new conclusion was arrived at, a new departure happened. At that time the support of this country in the higher path adopted might be counted on. Great Britain was not under the control of Russia. Nor was there any reason to suppose that the lapse of power from Conservatives to Liberals, if destined to occur, would bring Great Britain under such an influence.

By Liberals the Crimean war had been sustained. By Liberals the Treaty of 1856 had been established. The two leaders of the party had the aspect I have spoken of already. The startling event it has been requisite to glance at placed our country in alignment with the Power which Germany had quitted. But still no prompt retaliation was adopted and

no vindictive step was taken. A protest came, indeed, from Austria. Otherwise a *locus pœnitentiae* was afforded. A First Minister who has been Russian in his language may not be Russian in his policy. Or, if he is, his colleagues may be led to throw off an irregular usurping yoke to which they have submitted in a moment of despondency or weakness. Unfortunately, a series of transactions closed all hope, all possibility of that kind. Its last and most emphatic phase appeared at Copenhagen. Is it not rational to think that the German Empire may be led to disregard the vast inheritance of Peter the Great, and the agglomerations which have followed ; but not to poise itself against the power of the Czar and that of the United Kingdom both together ? Is it not just to reason that the German Empire may be drawn to independence of the greatest Military Power in the world ; but not when the greatest Naval Power in the world is flung into the same compartment of the balance ?

In the meantime M. de Giers—it is not a reproach, but, on the contrary, a tribute—has been an indefatigable agent. No wonder he was listened to, when he could urge that he was only leading the German Empire from a path on which its just and indispensable support had been capriciously annihilated. The evil first betrayed itself at Dantzig. It grew apace. It was matured at Skierniewice. It is invincible until you take away the cause which has produced it.

But if we consider how the new alliance was produced we see at once how it may gradually be terminated. A Russian flag must cease to hover over Downing Street and Whitehall. But I do not ask your Lordships to be sanguine. The effect may not be instantaneous. You cannot blot out Skierniewice from the annals of diplomacy. It would ill become the rulers in Berlin, whom we have driven to the arms of Russia, to shake off the embrace the very moment that it ceases to be essential to their safety. They must be faithful

to propriety ; they must be jealous of appearances ; they must be loyal to engagements. But when it is no longer dangerous and imprudent to revert to it, new incidents may soon arise to re-establish the policy of 1879, which we blindly have forced them to surrender. In the case supposed, events may happen to release both Germany and Austria from the new alliance they have incurred no reproach and no responsibility in joining.

My Lords, it is common out-of-doors to ask—in very unreflecting quarters—why the German Empire is so much less friendly to Great Britain than it used to be : as if no provocation had been offered ; as if no outrage had arisen ; as if the wanton resolution to unite with Russia in 1880, as if the persisting march along a Russian line for five years subsequent, was not, after the event of 1879, a cause of unavoidable estrangement ?

It may be asked, perhaps, in reference to the Motion I submit, Is any information wanted ? My Lords, a description of what occurred at Skiernievice, and the impression it produced coming from the Consul-General at Warsaw, would be, in a high degree, appropriate. For an event of this kind we ought not to be dependent wholly upon special correspondents, however graphic and industrious. It would also be desirable to know from our representative at Buda-Pesth in what manner the new union is regarded in Hungarian Assemblies, which have so great an influence on the policy of Austria. M. Tisza, the Hungarian First Minister, endeavoured to persuade the world on one occasion that Russia has been absorbed by Germany and Austria instead of reaching her original ascendancy. Can that opinion be corroborated ? Of all revelations the most precious, if we could have it, would be the judgment of the late Lord Ampthill as to the reunion of the Emperors. It is true his lamented death took place on August 26th, and the conference began on September 15th ; but for many months

he must have been prepared for such a demonstration. Few in the House would disagree with me as to the gravity with which he would be heard or read upon a subject of this character. His long residence at Berlin of nearly fifteen years had made him not only a Representative of the Queen, but an accepted member of the German Empire. His photograph may be seen in shop windows of its capital. He is remembered by the lowest as well as by the highest circles of society. His mental power was esteemed where the standard of mental power may well be deemed a high and an exacting one. The most discordant elements united in regarding him with confidence and favour. He joined, more than any other man, the solidity of a professor to the accomplishment and tact of a diplomatist. Having often seen him at his post, I am in some degree a witness. If an Ambassador could have maintained the German Empire on the path embraced in 1879, he would have been qualified to do so. But no Ambassador could overcome the motives to abandon it which I have touched upon this evening. His parting counsels may be in some degree elicited.

There is one objection against which the notice ought, perhaps, to be defended. It is thought by some that Egypt ought alone to occupy the House when foreign policy is mooted. I cannot acquiesce in that opinion. Egypt is but a corner of the area in which important problems are arising. We forget sometimes that Egypt is in Africa ; but, setting that aside, does any one suppose that the united force of Austria, Germany and Russia has no influence on what may pass between Khartoum and Alexandria ? Remember, there are two Powers who would drive you out of Egypt altogether, if at liberty to do so. France would drive you out ; because, according to traditions from the beginning of the century and the first Napoleon, they claim ascendancy over that region. The Sublime Porte would drive you out ; because it is the

suzerain authority, and because Great Britain went there without a mandate from the Sultan. The gigantic combination I have brought before the House to-night may render either of these Powers irresistible by merely whispering behind it.

Another objection is that, as the Conference at Skierniewice happened in September, it might have been discussed while this House was sitting in the autumn. No doubt the facts were then, as much as now, in evidence before us. No doubt the same considerations on the tendency of such a union might have been submitted. But at that time it was not possible, as now it is, to indicate the mode by which the danger may be obviated. To speak on the Holy Alliance, unless you have some counsel to suggest, would be as puerile a labour as to debate upon tyrannicide, the freedom of the press, the death of Charles I., or any large and long exhausted topic, on which our minds in younger days may have been exercised. In October and November it was thought that the existing Ministerial arrangements were essential to a particular transaction—a particular solution on an internal topic generally aimed at. They are essential to nothing now except the aggravated prospect of a war with Russia, and the obvious inability to guide it. They are essential to nothing now except the deeper risk, the more complete humiliation of the Empire.

I beg to make the Motion of which I have given notice.

After the debate,

Lord Stratheden and Campbell said that if no correspondence on the subject was available for being presented, the Motion might be withdrawn without impropriety. As to the remark of the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury), he ought to mention that he had gone on in the absence of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with the express concurrence of the Government.

May 7th, 1885.

TURKEY—THE BOSPHORUS AND DARDANELLES
—CONVENTION OF PARIS, 1856, AND TREATY
OF BERLIN, 1878.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

MY LORDS,—I rise to move an humble Address to the Crown for the Protocols or Treaties which regulate the authority of the Sublime Porte to admit foreign ships of war into the Dardanelles. It is hardly necessary to refer to the circumstances which suggest a Motion of this character. In every society, young or old, grave or gay, political or private, they have recently been mentioned. It is true that on Monday last a new fact entered the discussion. I deferred, in consequence, the Motion on that day, and would willingly have postponed it altogether, unless reflection had convinced me that the official statement, although calculated to diminish, ought not to remove the public apprehension as to differences with Russia. Before sitting down, I may offer something in defence of that opinion. But it is first desirable to touch on the Conventions which explain the power of the Sultan in the matter now before us.

My Lords, the press at home and on the Continent is full of ambiguity regarding them, which can only be directed by the documents I ask for united in a single view, and not dispersed in many volumes. We are always meeting statements that Germany or Austria, or some other Power, in the event of serious contingencies, will prohibit the Sublime Porte from admitting foreign ships of war into the Dardanelles.

These statements are made with little reference to past occurrences or past enactments on the subject. Journalists, in agitated times, are too much hurried to investigate. I will submit what seems to me a faithful outline of the question.

In the beginning of the century there were, no doubt, conventions to restrain foreign ships of war from going into the waters of the Sultan when he was at peace. So far back as 1809, it is certain, on the authority of Calvo, the great master of public law, that they existed. In a Treaty of 1841 they are referred to, in those of 1856 they are repeated. But in 1871 they underwent a grave modification. At that time, as a counterpoise to the arrangements by which Russia regained the power of cruising in the Black Sea, taken away after the Crimean war, the Sultan was permitted, even without hostilities beginning, to invite into the Bosphorus the armed ships of friendly Powers when he deemed it for his own security to do so. The new authority was brought about by what was termed the Black Sea Conference in London. It has never been exerted; it has been absolutely latent during the burning phases of the Eastern Question, which have followed it.

But such a fact, whether the result of chance, irresolution or impolicy, leaves the power equally unquestioned. The Treaty of Berlin does nothing to correct the rules as left in 1871. It, on the contrary, embodies and repeats them. As regards that point, the Treaty has been recently and carefully examined under my direction. The whole matter, if I am not deceived, admits a summary expression. According to the Law of Nations it is open to any State to give a passage over land or water it possesses to the military or naval force of a belligerent.

But as regards the Straits within the Ottoman Empire, the Law of Nations has been disturbed and superseded by Conventions. Those Conventions have again, in 1871, been

modified and widened. The upshot is that prohibitions fall not upon the Sultan, but on other Powers. No Power can despatch its fleets without his sanction to the Dardanelles. But that sanction turns entirely on his judgment. His right over the waters on his territory is similar to that of France upon the Seine, of Russia on the Neva, of Portugal upon the Tagus. If this interpretation is erroneous, the Papers I demand will bring the true one into notice.

Whenever the collision, so frequently anticipated, happens, the facility of operating in the Black Sea is most important to this country. It is the only area in which Russia has ever been successfully encountered by Powers wishing to restrain her. Since she became a formidable member of the European system, there are but a few instances in which campaigns have been designed or organised against her. They may be all enumerated in a moment, and the lesson is most apposite. The earliest was that of the Swedish monarch Charles XII., which was directed from the north to the south-east, and ended fatally, at least disastrously, for him and for his kingdom, at the well-known battle of Pultova. The next in order is that of the first Napoleon, in 1812, of which the detail lives in the immortal pages of Count de Segur. Advancing from the south to the north-east, it culminated in the fire of Moscow and the destruction of the army which retreated from it. The third was our own attempt to threaten Cronstadt, in the Baltic, under Sir Charles Napier. Your Lordships know—as those times come back with force upon us—that while it succeeded as a defensive measure, or blockade, it failed no less completely as an effort of invasion. The expedition to the shores of the Crimea was almost a simultaneous one. It is the only expedition against Russia which has had a brilliant, although in some degree ephemeral result. The Black Sea was its necessary channel. If the Black Sea is closed for her advantage, Russia is entitled, by

the history of the past, to deem herself invincible. It is of practical importance to explore with accuracy all the diplomatic grounds on which the Sultan may be asked to grant her an immunity from the only danger which experience has taught her to consider as a grave one.

My Lords, there is but one mode of thinking to which the Address would be obnoxious, and which it is therefore indispensable to guard against. It is the mode of thinking which rejects the possibility of war with Russia and counts upon a satisfactory adjustment. The announcement of the Government has, of course, done something to encourage that impression. The financial world has seized it with a natural, but yet, as it appears to me, unreasoning avidity. Let it be granted that the Government may smooth over the immediate questions on the Afghan frontier; let it be granted that arbitration may patch up the controversy between Sir Peter Lumsden and General Komaroff; but the movement on Herat which tends undoubtedly to war—on that point the voice of Professor Vambéry is known to us—can scarcely be arrested so long as Russia has rare, immense and previously unknown encouragements to prosecute it.

It is worth while to glance at those encouragements before the Motion is rejected as a useless one. Those encouragements reside not in the intrinsic force or unity or resolution of that Empire, great as they may be, but in the peculiar circumstances both of Europe and Great Britain. The Holy Alliance is in avowed, in flagrant, lately renovated vigour. Had it been working for two or three years we might derive a slender hope from its exhaustion and satiety. Like individuals, nations may grow tired of one another. As things now stand, it is well known at St. Petersburg that Germany and Austria can offer no assistance to this country. There is no drag-chain upon Russia from that quarter. In the Crimean war it was not easy to obtain it. It is impossible at present.

It is seen that France is bitterly opposed to us, or she would hardly have resented the suppression of a malignant journal by the Khedive. The Sublime Porte is irrecoverable until our Ministerial position has been altered. It would be devoid of memory, of dignity, of prudence, unless it were so irrecoverable—with some kind of reparation and security—after the series of transactions by which it has been diligently alienated. Those who know Constantinople—amongst whom I cannot reckon many members of the Government—are aware that when the Embassies of Russia, Germany and Austria are united, the British Embassy is pulled down to utter insignificance. It may be that, acting on this theory, the Government have virtually closed it. The Earl of Dufferin has not been replaced. There is no Ambassador at present to attempt communication with the Sultan. If he excludes Great Britain from the Black Sea, Russia may attempt Herat with absolute impunity. If he admits Great Britain to the Black Sea, she is wholly unsupported in it. Do we forget how many nations were required in the Crimea? It was only by the solemn union of this country, of France, Sardinia and the Porte with Austria in the rear as a benevolent spectator, that after countless toils and tragical vicissitudes Sebastopol was taken.

But there is something else to urge on Russia to adventurous persistence. My Lords, it is that our foreign policy is still directed by the very agency which led in 1870 to the concessions she obtained, which took away Sir Henry Layard from Constantinople, which did her work in Montenegro, which organised, or tried to organise, a European concert in her favour. In our day the problem of diplomacy, to put it in its essence, is a contention between London and St. Petersburg for influence at Berlin. Who does not see to which the palm belongs, to which it has inevitably fallen? But it is not only incapacity or isolation seen in Great Britain which urges Russia to activity and enterprise. It is well known to her

rulers that our Government are unavoidably affected by the consciousness of military failure. The same body which retired from South Africa because unable to redeem its pledges or hold its ground against barbarians, the same body which has failed egregiously to rescue General Gordon, the same body which is now disposed to give up Khartoum, would have to undertake a task too great for the abilities of the first Napoleon, with recent laurels to inspire, with tributary sovereigns to back, with conquered nations to fight under him. If nothing, according to the proverb, is so successful as past triumph, nothing is so calamitous as recent and profound humiliation.

But there is something else to paralyse the Government and lead on Russia to the conflict. The movement on Herat can only be suspended or retarded, but never actually renounced, so long as Russia sees in Downing Street a First Minister—however subtle and ingenious—who encouraged the aggressive war of 1877, who opposed the Vote of Credit in 1878, who did not wish the Treaty of San Stefano to be attenuated to the Treaty of Berlin, who only the last autumn, on September 1st, in his own name before his own electors, held up the keenest advocate of Russian despotism and of Russian conquest as the person to whom the British public ought to look for guidance and direction. So long as he remains, the temptation to advance we offer at St. Petersburg is wholly irresistible. It is imagined, feebly and erroneously, that a recent speech involves a metamorphosis which would no doubt be critically useful. In point of fact, that speech blots out no passage of his conduct since he invented the new faith in Russia as a civilising Power to be followed. But if he underwent a moral revolution, a political convulsion—and he has traversed many—the old impression could not be immediately dispersed and superseded. The speech upon the Vote of Credit is a new encouragement to Russia, if only followed

by concessions as it has been. It proves to Russia that his language may be safely disregarded, whatever colour it assumes.

My Lords, in spite of any language he may hold, and even more of any views he may arrive at, the Russian leaders know that so long as he is our First Minister he shelters them from all the perils which might otherwise arrest them. So long as he remains it is impossible that the mass of European Powers should be arrayed against them. So long as he remains the Holy Alliance cannot be divided, the German Empire cannot be successfully appealed to, the Sublime Porte cannot be won back to common action with Great Britain. It must also be recollected by the statesmen at St. Petersburg that in the event of war Constantinople will be as much an object as Herat. When are they to reach Constantinople, so nearly grasped, so painfully relinquished, if not when the Western Powers are embroiled, and when the First Minister of Great Britain is unable to defend it without the sacrifice of something more than his professions and his policy?

My Lords, that war with Russia is the consequence of retaining a First Minister who has, or only seems to have, an inclination to that Power, does not stand on reason, probability or theory, although they would effectually uphold it. A sad and not remote example has betrayed it. It is seen by all who accurately measure that transaction that the imputed partiality of the late Earl of Aberdeen for Russia produced the war which led us on to the Crimea, and that had Viscount Palmerston replaced him in 1853 the Danubian Principalities would not have been invaded. There is not wanting evidence to show that the Czar Nicholas was lured on to aggression by his dependence on the leniency and confidence with which the head of our Government apparently regarded him. The observation has been made a hundred times, but ought not to escape us when its conclusion is so vital. We do not come here to display originality at such a moment

as the present. The situation is a clear one. An arrangement demonstrably calculated to bring on war with Russia, in spite of pledges the most solemn, was made in 1880. In 1885 for weeks that war has been impending. So long as the First Minister continues in his office, so long as Russia keeps her eyes upon Herat, the cloud remains, although the storm has been retarded. But while the cloud remains the storm is always ready to descend upon us. We are bound, therefore, to look forward to hostilities. It is in the Black Sea alone we can pursue them with advantage. Until these Protocols or Treaties are collected, it will be doubtful how far that zone of operations is accessible. The research is insignificant, as I could easily convince the Government. As to the expense, it will not be considerable, and ought not to weigh with men who have prepared a gulf which only millions can bridge over.

After debate,

The remarks of the noble Earl the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs demand one observation upon my part. The language of despair which he imputes to me is not despair as to the resources of the country, when the peculiar burden of the Ministerial position is withdrawn from it, but as to its power of opposing Russia when artificially and wantonly deprived of all support in Europe. For the rest, the personal allusions of the noble Earl are thoroughly innocuous. They are the necessity of his position, since he resolved to be the organ of the Premier. He holds his office on the tenure of attacking those who have disputed the authority of the right hon. gentleman. I repeat what I have urged before, after full inquiry, that these Protocols and Treaties exist in no collected form, and that until they do the prevalent obscurity as to the rights of entrance to the Dardanelles is likely to continue. I shall not be able, therefore, to withdraw the Motion.

February 23rd, 1888.

BULGARIA—EUROPEAN TURKEY.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS FOR FURTHER PAPERS ON THE LATE EVENTS IN EUROPEAN TURKEY.

MY LORDS,—The present Motion is directed to obtain further papers on the late events in European Turkey. To justify the Motion, it would be sufficient to call attention to the correspondence on Bulgaria. That correspondence gives the narrative of incidents which followed the attempt to violate the Treaty of Berlin and to extend the limits of the vassal principality. But it does not go beyond the end of 1886. For all that happened subsequently—and much has happened, as your Lordships know—we have but unauthenticated records.

My Lords, it is remarkable that, although the Eastern Question has been vividly reopened by what occurred in September 1885, not a voice in this House has since been heard upon it. At one time, and more especially under Lord Beaconsfield, the subject constantly engaged us. At present the House contains three noble lords who have presided at the Foreign Office, three who have been ambassadors at St. Petersburg, one who has held the same appointment at Berlin, two Under Secretaries of the Department mentioned, one parliamentary and the other permanent. To-day it would at least be useful to elicit some of their conclusions as to the line which ought to be adopted. I do not wish myself to go too deeply or too fully into a topic which since 1871 I have had many opportunities of handling.

The general position, I venture to submit, is that great

difficulties are likely to arise out of the Bulgarian events unless a timely measure is adopted. I am not at all inclined to predict war under ordinary circumstances. It seems to me, after a course of observation, that war depends on individuals ; that no war is able to produce itself unless, in one of the entangled Powers, some individual has resolved upon promoting it. Nations may be, indeed, excitable in feeling ; but do not rush—so far as history tells us—by a spontaneous movement into conflict. On that ground I have habitually maintained in recent times that no war between France and Germany was imminent so long as neither at Paris nor Berlin you could refer to any leader ready to initiate it. It is not, therefore, as a person who exaggerates the tendency to war, but one who might be thought to underrate it, that I am inclined to anticipate disturbances in south-eastern Europe, if no controlling influence is brought to bear—and even promptly—on the subject.

My Lords, the correspondence on Bulgaria—from which, however, I have no intention to read extracts—throws light upon the Russian grounds of interference in that country.

When, in September 1885, Prince Alexander acceded to the movement for uniting Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria against the Treaty of Berlin, Russia was disposed—from any motives you think proper to assign—to uphold the Treaty and to resist the deviation from it. It cannot be said that the other signatory Powers have ever fully sanctioned the encroachment, so as to raise it to legality. Russia, therefore, has a *locus standi* for protesting against the union which the sudden violence of insurrection and the sudden weakness of authority had called into existence. But Russia is entitled to complain of more than fusion of the countries intended by the Treaty to be separate. The Government of Bulgaria is now being carried on by a Prince who has no sanction at Constantinople, no sanction from the other Powers, and who,

although elected in Bulgaria, has been elected by a body of which—to use a guarded phrase—at least the regularity is doubtful.

We must remember that the Treaty of Berlin lays down three processes for the creation of a vassal prince, not one of which has been adhered to. But there is something further. The intruded Prince is not a member of the Bulgarian Church, or even in the Greek religion on which that Church, however separate in its establishment, is founded. It is true, the Treaty does not lay down that he must be so. But it may fairly be contended that a Prince of alien creed, of opposite convictions, although endorsed by popular enthusiasm for a time, will some day be obnoxious to a party, as occurred from different causes to his predecessor. His relations with the Exarch can never be entirely harmonious. On his arrival there was a hostile movement in connection with this matter. The Exarch in that country, even politically speaking, is much too great a force to be passed over. The Bulgarian Church is well known to have been the germ of the Bulgarian Principality.

Again—and I will pass as quickly as I can over so delicate a ground—in France there are contingencies—beyond the bounds of probability, but not of possibility—in which Prince Ferdinand would be the member of a reigning family, and so become disqualified to hold his situation in Bulgaria by an enactment of the Treaty.

The despatch-writers of Russia, allowed for many years to be the first, are certain to present their case with accessory details and ingenious shades, so as to make it far more hard to grapple with than it would appear upon this statement. If, therefore, Russia is induced by motives unavowed to have recourse to arms, she must have the aspect of doing so as the champion of the Treaty. She may also, as regards Bulgaria, derive encouragement from that speech which has been ringing

through the world, although I would not be too positive as to its true interpretation.

A hazard of this kind ought clearly not to be prolonged without an effort to abridge it. It may be said that efforts have been made already. We have heard of various expedients discussed between Russia and the Porte. But none have been adopted. There has been no Conference to regulate these difficulties. When everything else breaks down a Conference suggests itself. When was a Conference more needed? It would not be without a late example. The Treaty of Berlin left dangerous questions open between Greece and the Ottoman Empire. Although results arose which were not wholly satisfactory, it was only by a Conference that some adjustment was effected.

There is another ground on which a Conference may possibly be requisite or urgent. By a peculiar imperfection in the Treaty of Berlin, each Power has a veto on the nomination of the vassal Prince in Bulgaria, and on the nomination of the Viceroys acting for the Porte in East Roumelia. The subject was debated in the Congress of 1878, and the noble Marquess, now First Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury), did his utmost to establish the legal right of a majority. The result is, however, that if in either of these posts a vacancy occurs by death or resignation three times in any year, three times it might be utterly impossible to fill it, without collision between the signatory Powers. A Conference might thus be necessary for two objects : to put an end to the intrigues and perils of Bulgaria ; to prevent their unavoidable recurrence whenever vacancies arise in either of these offices.

These are the grounds on which a Conference—unless some better method is adopted—seems to be desirable. A high authority, however, may be quoted in its favour. In 1878 Prince Bismarck—and here I am again referring to the

Protocols—used this language as it is translated. It is the only passage I shall read this evening :—

“ If the Bulgarian populations, either through ill-will or innate incapacity, cannot make their institutions work, Europe will in truth be obliged to take counsel, but later on and when that time shall have arrived.”

It may be said, indeed, that by despatches, telegrams and interviews, the European Powers are enabled to collect their wisdom, and that a Conference may thus be superseded. For two years they have been doing so. The effort has been signally defective, and now we seem to be on the verge of grave events unless a Conference anticipates them. If it succeeds, tranquillity will be secured. But time is gained even should no decision be arrived at.

We know the course of Russia in 1877, and the disquietude which followed it. But now her pretexts of aggression are much stronger and more specious. She would not have a European mandate to overthrow the recent usurpation in Bulgaria ; but neither had she the shadow of a European mandate to go over the Pruth in 1877 as the guardian of the races said to be misgoverned under Ottoman dominion. But she went over. Her doing so was a grave encroachment on the Treaties of 1856, since the essence of those Treaties was to withdraw from Russia any special right of interference within the territory of the Sultan. At present she would interfere to vindicate a Treaty, not to overturn one. But if Russia occupies Bulgaria, Constantinople must in the long run, and after a certain time, be seriously threatened ; while all the Mediterranean Powers—and not least the Power which holds Cyprus, Malta, Gibraltar, and provisionally Egypt—are interested in defending it.

But one thing must be admitted. A conference can only

be initiated by Great Britain. Prince Bismarck has pointed out that the function of leading on the Eastern Question now devolves upon Great Britain. For many reasons better known to Her Majesty's Government than to myself, the proposal will not come from Berlin, from Vienna, or from St. Petersburg, however welcome it might be in all those capitals or some of them. It may not be easy even to induce Russia to partake in any European Council. In 1878 it was not easy. But the noble Marquess and his friends eventually succeeded. They may succeed now without employing all the methods which at that time were resorted to. The union of two offices—First Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—in the person of the noble Marquess, so far as it divides his energy, imparts, no doubt, a greater difficulty to the task I have suggested. But when the Bulgarian embarrassment has passed away his union of two offices may have a better vindication than it has yet been able to arrive at.

There is one further reason—and it seems to me conclusive—for immediate action to finish the anomalous position in Bulgaria, either by a Conference or any other method which appears more rapid or feasible. It is the instability of Governments—however prudent and however gifted—which, like the present one, have not elsewhere an absolute majority. No doubt, according to the opinion of to-day, the Government is tolerably settled. But few thought in January 1886 that the noble Marquess would be so suddenly outvoted. A few months before he had assured us that the Ministry was likely to endure, although he claimed at first no other merit for it.

Let us suppose a Government established—I do not point to individuals—which in consequence of past transactions was even thought to have a Russian bias. Russia would then be unduly and unavoidably excited into schemes of action on the Eastern Question which a Conference must limit.

She would not, therefore, go into a Conference. But Germany and Austria, whose position is now defined and satisfactory, must soon, in that event, be led into a new one. They may be ready to oppose themselves to Russia ; but it does not follow that they are ready to oppose themselves to Russia and Great Britain both together. It is a formidable union for them to contemplate—despotism leaning upon freedom, the greatest naval and the greatest military Power drawn into alignment. But what is the effect at Constantinople of the occurrence to be dreaded ? The Porte, deprived of all encouragement the British Embassy can give, is forced to listen to whatever counsels the Russian Embassy may urge upon it.

It will be, at least, apparent that there is no desire upon my part to elicit information from the Government which they have objects in concealing. Whether they have joined in any recent combination for guarding European peace is not the question now before us. It may be left, indeed, to other men and other places. I do not wish to probe the secrets of the Government ; although, if the train of reasoning which I have briefly urged is just, I should be glad to think it might contribute to their policy.

July 29th, 1889.

TURKEY—BULGARIA.

MY LORDS,—There is not much novel matter in the volume of correspondence on Bulgaria for which I moved last Session. It goes down to December 1887, and covers the election of Prince Ferdinand. It will not, I trust, be thought presumptuous upon my part to refer to it. At the same time I should have scarcely ventured to bring it before the House unless protracted observation, so far as one can make it in this country, led me to think that a revival of the Eastern Question may be possibly impending. The Blue-book would tend itself to warrant that conclusion. There is in it a speech of Count Kalnoky, which well explains the situation in Bulgaria. Count Kalnoky shows that Prince Ferdinand has not the sanction of the Porte or of the Powers required by the third section of the Treaty of Berlin. The explanation is more serious as coming from an Austrian Minister, who might be thought to look with favour on an Austrian candidate pursuing an election to the vassal principality.

There is a despatch from Sir William White, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, showing that Russia is inclined to prolong the status which gives her so much right to interfere, and that her Government refuse, when asked by the Sublime Porte, to mention Princes who would have her acquiescence in Bulgaria. There is a despatch from the noble Marquess the Secretary of State, intimating that one party in Bulgaria is eager to declare its independence, by which the suzerain would be drawn into reprisals; that another party is disposed to recall Prince Alexander, by

which a Russian occupation might be easily precipitated. There are despatches from Sir Robert Morier which throw the greatest doubt on the intentions forming at St. Petersburg, and prove at least that the existing status in Bulgaria can hardly ever be accepted there. The pervading essence of the Blue-book—that I may sum it up more generally—is to exhibit frequent insurrections against the provincial *régime*, severe punishments inflicted on their leaders, and emphatic protests of the Russian Government—which point to future intervention—in their favour.

Since 1887, when the Blue-book closes, we know, by less official sources, that a collision between Prince Ferdinand and the Exarch of Bulgaria has happened, and that no less than sixty persons were arrested at the moment of the discord which arose between the civil and religious power. However, we are led to ask for much more recent indications. We have them in Crete, which has before now furnished preludes to more general disturbance, and been metaphorically painted as the stormy petrel of the Eastern Question. We have them in Armenia, to which so much attention was lately called by a noble Earl on the other side (the Earl of Carnarvon) and by a well-known prelate who supported him.

What more impresses me is that the organs of the Government for weeks have all united in prognosticating Eastern danger. Their opinion seems to be confirmed, although more indirectly than directly, by Continental journals which I need not specify at present.

My Lords, whoever goes back only for a minute to the Treaty of Berlin will see the greatest antecedent probability that the Eastern Question would reopen. Two independent nations were created—Servia and Roumania—liable to go to war against the Porte, one of which has done so since.

The invasion of Bulgaria by Servia in 1885, on the alleged ground of its disloyalty, was so regarded by the Sultan.

Austria established without a given limit, but not in perpetuity, on the territory of the Porte—it may have been a deeply calculating measure—was certain to excite hostility in Russia. Bulgaria, when formed into a vassal principality, was inevitably doomed to think of absorbing East Roumelia, which has taken place, and of flinging off the suzerain, against which the noble Marquess has had occasion to discourage her. At this moment there may be in the midst of Parliament routine and legislative details which absorb us a kind of incredulity as to anything more grave occurring in those regions. But so there was in 1875, when the three Empires entered on commercial treaties with the vassal principalities, and when the subject came before your Lordships for discussion.

Who thought at that time that the Herzegovinian insurrection was at once to follow, or the Servian war, or the Bulgarian rebellion? Who thought that the noble Marquess was to be hurried from the India Office to Constantinople in November 1876, or that Russia would cross the Pruth a few months afterwards? She crossed the Pruth in violation of one Treaty, and might cross it now in partial execution of another.

My Lords, under these circumstances and with this apprehension, measures may suggest themselves, although without more information it is difficult to judge them. It may not be impossible to correct the situation in Bulgaria, either by gaining the assent of all the Powers to Prince Ferdinand, or else by superseding him, or else by the appointment of a Regency, which, according to another passage of the Blue-book, Lord Iddesleigh recommended, and M. de Giers, to a great extent, accepted.

Last year, in February, I held a Conference to be desirable, and the noble Marquess seemed to coincide with me, if all the Powers could be induced to join it. It is clear they will

not do so, and that other methods are essential. At least, until the situation in Bulgaria is altered there cannot be tranquillity for Europe. On this point further knowledge would be valuable. It might be also important to place the Treaties of 1856 upon a larger basis and a firmer one. They are, in some degree, confused by those which followed in 1871 and 1878, while yet they are in vigour. The most effective—that of April 15th—includes France, Austria and Great Britain, while from the movement of the world, the march of history, it is, in fact, confined to Austria and Great Britain. The security of the country upon the Eastern Question would at least be greater if it was re-enacted in such a way that Germany and Italy, with other Powers, were comprehended in it. But nothing can be urged as yet distinctly on the subject.

My Lords, having before now directed your attention to that topic, I cannot but attach the greatest possible importance to the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies which began in 1877, if only upon this ground. When Great Britain is required to defend the Porte, on European as well as Indian grounds, we must invoke the popular opinion of the country. It is one thing to ask the country to make sacrifices for a despotic, another to ask it to make sacrifices for a constitutional authority. The Ottoman Assemblies, which were overthrown when Russia reached San Stefano, although not similar to ours, were still a check upon the arbitrary power of the Sultan. Sir Henry Layard, who had, as an Ambassador, to watch their operation, is the unanswered, unrefuted witness to their efficacy. Had they gone on, Armenia might not have required the noble Earl and his most reverend supporter to explain its wrongs or advocate its interests. There is another ground on which they are important, even indispensable. Until they have been fully tried, you cannot meditate a further system on the Bosphorus. Until their capability of

effecting objects which our policy has aimed at is disproved, you cannot enter upon any further changes in the territory of the Sultan. But to revive them at Constantinople against the influence of Russia and the Palace presents a formidable problem and one on which more light might usefully be concentrated.

My Lords, it may be urged that measures of this kind, however just, can hardly be pursued when the Foreign Office is so much overloaded as it is at present. We know, indeed, from records of Lord Bolingbroke, of Mr. Canning, and Lord Palmerston, that it is in itself a most laborious Department. I have heard the late Lord Clarendon, the last autumn that he held it, remark to a society of gentlemen, when he was going home at night, that he should have to work till about four o'clock in the morning. If any one could act as First Minister and Secretary of State together, in point of versatility and industry, it would be, perhaps, the noble Marquess. But the year before last he was compelled—it must have been compulsion—to absent himself from Parliament before the Session finished. The burden, therefore, seems to be too great for any one, if permanent. It may, in moments of particular emergency, be necessary to sustain it. I once contended in the House, when Russia was advancing on Constantinople, that, in order to prevent duality and discord, then apparent in the Government, it would be useful for Lord Beaconsfield to join the two functions. I do not say the noble Marquess is not as well qualified to do so, or repeat the maxim *Quod licet Jovi non licet bovi*. But three Sessions may be too long a period for an exceptional arrangement, unless on diplomatic grounds it is essential to preserve it. In France it is true that since 1870 and under Louis Philippe the offices have been frequently united. But it would hardly be maintained that, in effect or influence abroad, the result has been entirely successful.

My Lords, there are a set of fallacies upon the Eastern Question which it requires the fullest information to disperse, and which are often in the way of policy and action. One is, that Germany and Austria are sufficient for the defence of the Ottoman Empire against Russia, and that the Western Powers may judiciously abandon it. When have Germany and Austria alone been able to defend it? Was it in 1829, or in the Crimean war, or in the recent struggle? Another is, that to command Egypt is sufficient for Great Britain. But the Power which obtains Constantinople must eventually hold Egypt, and close your shorter route to India altogether. Another is, that Great Britain has nothing but security in India to consider,—as if she was not a Mediterranean Power while holding Cyprus, Malta, Gibraltar, and as if Russia at Constantinople would not be dangerous to all the Mediterranean Powers put together. Another is, that in order to reform Ottoman abuses you ought to sanction Russian interference. The noble Marquess pointed out the other day that where Great Britain ceases to defend she must cease to admonish. I do not blame those, although unable to concur with them as yet, who look to a Byzantine Empire, which the Duke of Wellington at one time contemplated as a possible arrangement. No doubt it would be easier to secure allies for a Byzantine Empire than for a Mahometan dominion. No doubt, as in former ages there has been a rushing tide of Asia towards Europe, there is now an apparent flood of Europe into Asia. But such a growth is pregnant with incalculable difficulties. It must be ascertained by what race, what individual and what army it would have to be directed, organised, sustained; whether Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria or Greece should be regarded as its genius and mainspring. It must be ascertained whether it could harmonise with due consideration for the Asiatic provinces of Turkey. But to uphold Constantinople against aggressive

power would seem to be the indispensable preliminary to any further triumph of the Cross over the Crescent. Nor ought these views to be regarded as irrelevant, if it is felt that the Government may soon be called on to fulfil the obligations which the Crimean war enhanced, although it did not actually originate.

My Lords, I am conscious of alluding to the subject in a perfunctory manner. But, as we may be on the eve of a serious transaction with regard to it, involving multiplied debates, it is better for men who speak to economise at once the time and patience of their hearers.

After the debate,

Lord Stratheden and Campbell said he had no reason to detain the House with further observations, as Her Majesty's Government were willing to accept the Motion which he offered. He could not but remark, in passing, that the impressive language of the noble Earl (Earl of Carnarvon), so far as it was just, suggested stronger grounds for the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies than could have otherwise been given.

March 9th, 1891.

TURKEY AND THE EASTERN QUESTION.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, in rising to call attention to the correspondence on Turkey, and to move an humble Address to Her Majesty for further Papers in connection with the Eastern Question, said : My Lords,—A notice of this kind would have come on in August last had it not been for the absence of the noble Marquess who directs the Foreign Office. Something at the time occurred with regard to the appointment of the bishops in Macedonia which tended to provoke a serious discussion, and it is no matter of astonishment that the noble Marquess, placed and burdened as he is, should sometimes withdraw before the Session terminates. I make no observation upon that point. I know how difficult it is to draw attention to any question of foreign policy at present. We have had too much in the United Kingdom to pre-occupy and distract us ; but even the incidents of the Divorce Court and the embarrassments of Ireland will not avert the march of armies on Constantinople, but, on the contrary, are much more likely to encourage it. They do not either release Great Britain from the obligation of supporting the treaties she has entered into. It is when we are much pre-occupied at home that we become more vulnerable in the larger and more general circumference. To take an extreme case, if the country was engaged in civil war, Parliament no doubt would be rather deaf to foreign policy ; and yet, under those conditions, foreign policy would be fraught with peril

and anxiety. Domestic troubles should be an incentive, although no doubt they are rather an anodyne, of vigilance.

Although, under the circumstances which I am pointing to, I cannot hope to draw much attention from your Lordships, I will hazard a few remarks in strict accordance with the notice I have given. There is a volume upon Crete which contains an important despatch from Commander Brenton, proving that the disturbances in Crete were pretty well arranged unless aggressive movements in Greece happened to renew them. There is an important volume upon the trial of Moussa Bey, the Kurdish chieftain, which shows that in the east as well as in the west of Europe it is not easy to obtain convictions in spite of evidence to call for them. His acquittal was lamented by the British Embassy and by the Foreign Office. There is a volume on Bulgaria, which shows that the position there is still unaltered ; that Prince Ferdinand has not received the sanction of the Powers, and that the Sublime Porte has sent out a manifesto to impeach the validity of his position. There is a volume also, presented in this very Session, which is a lively mirror of Armenian disturbances. It concludes, however, with an intimation that at the end of last December they were in a great degree composed. During the last three months there is perfect darkness, which might be a sufficient ground for seeking further information. In the volume on Armenia, presented in this Session, there is an interesting minute from Mr. Clifford Lloyd (at page 82) which will remind any one who reads it of a well-known passage in Burke, to the effect that "distance always weakens government," and which shows that the Sultan cannot govern in Kurdistan as he might do in Asia Minor. It is curious as showing that the genius of one century may be corroborated by the detailed knowledge of another. As it would be fatiguing, I shall read no extracts to your Lordships. It is more important to advert to the conclusions which the Blue-books may suggest to us.

They are, I think, that Russia is entitled to expostulate as regards the position of Bulgaria—that peace is due to a great extent to moderation and forbearance upon her part. If Russia is ever to move again towards the Balkans, it ought to be when France is seeking her alliance; when Germany, on that account, is little able to restrain her; when Great Britain is anxious about Herat and India, as well as about the Black Sea and the Bosphorus; when a distinguished orator who sought the partnership of Russia, and who proclaimed her benevolence, is active still on the political arena.

But what may be the counsels at St. Petersburg is too intricate a question for me, perhaps for any one, to fathom. It may, however, be worth while to point to two or three expedients or precautions which these documents, in some degree, suggest to us. One is that the mode of nomination of the Prince of Bulgaria ought to be corrected. The principle of giving a veto to every Power has proved to be impracticable. It ought to be recollected to his credit that at the Congress of Berlin the noble Marquess did his utmost to prevent it. You may see it in the Protocols. Another is, that it might be usefully laid down that the ruler of Bulgaria, whether he is destined to be sovereign or vassal, should only be of the Greek or of the Bulgarian religion. As the Blue-books show, Russia is inexorable against Prince Ferdinand on the ground of his connection with the Vatican. The third point which might suggest itself at present is that the Treaty of April 15th, 1856, by which Austria, France and Great Britain engaged to act together when the Sublime Porte is in danger, might be subjected to some reconstruction, by which other Powers should be admitted to partake in it. It might then become what it has not been—a barrier to war, a shelter to the Bosphorus.

But I pass by these topics, each of which would in itself suffice to occupy an evening, in order to go on to one which

is more practical and urgent; which also tends to a result more easily attainable. I cannot help thinking that the time has come when a judicious effort might be made to revive the Ottoman Assemblies which sat in 1877, which were supported by Sir Henry Layard as Ambassador, by Sir William Gregory and Mr. Laurence Oliphant as travellers, which were suspended by the war, and which have fallen since into comparative oblivion.

Ten years ago, upon a Motion exclusively devoted to that subject, I went into a statement which is long ago forgotten, but which at present I should venture to repeat, only desiring to add to it an observation suggested by the recent "Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe." Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was well known to your Lordships. Although he was, no doubt, little suited to the Parliamentary arena, as a thinker, a negotiator, a despatch-writer, his merits have been long acknowledged and referred to. To recall his type you would have to go back to the first Earl of Malmesbury in the last century. Now, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, during a long career at Constantinople, was constantly engaged in an attempt to overcome abuses from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from the Danube to the Tigris and Euphrates in the State to which he was accredited. After the Crimean war, which raised him to a pinnacle almost above the Sultan and his Empire, he appeared to have established various advantages. But still he had imperfectly succeeded. The evidence is copious. You have it in the admirable work of Mr. Nassau Senior, who travelled to Constantinople and the East between the close of the Crimean war and the retirement of the illustrious diplomatist. Mr. Nassau Senior was admitted to the confidence of the Ambassador, and was not at all inclined to disparage his achievements. But that volume constantly reflects the general misrule, imperfect justice, lawless conduct, and

corrupt administration which everywhere met the brilliant, painstaking observer.

Now, the point which I wish to bring before the House is this : that what Lord Stratford de Redcliffe failed to do, his successors can hardly be expected to accomplish, because they have not the splendid vantage ground of the Crimean war from which he was enabled to exert himself. No doubt Lord Dalling, Lord Lyons, Sir Henry Elliot, and others who succeeded Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in that post, were men of eminent ability, but they were not, like him, from early youth acclimatised upon the Bosphorus, and therefore could not reach his personal ascendancy. Nor is it the least disparagement to say that even Sir William White, who stands above my praise, is far from likely to effect what Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was thus unable to accomplish. I know that the prevalent opinion in Great Britain as to Ottoman abuses runs in an old and rather superannuated channel. Governments are urged and Embassies exhorted to lecture or reform autocracy in the Ottoman Empire, as if political assemblies had never come into existence there. The old agency is constantly invoked, in spite of its reiterated and indeed intelligible failure. The new one, in spite of the applause it gained during the short time it lasted, is altogether disregarded, as if it had no place in history. Articles and speeches are constantly put forward to make autocracy effective and benevolent ; but none, or scarcely any, are directed to restore the agency by which improvement is attainable. If all the power of mind so frequently brought to bear on the despotic system of the Ottoman Empire were directed to the establishment of a system for reforming and for balancing it, the end, no doubt, would be attained. But no such effort is apparent. On the contrary, the fig tree is importuned for grapes, the vine is left to perish on the dust heap.

I admit, however, that the present Government can hardly be expected to make exertions to revive the Ottoman Assemblies, unless impelled in some degree by national opinion. Those bodies came into existence, at least apparently, as a counter-project to the schemes of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) and of General Ignatieff in the Conference which went on at Constantinople toward the close of 1876. Their origin, however, is wholly independent of that circumstance. They would have appeared if the noble Marquess and General Ignatieff had never met, and if the Conference which I have referred to had never come into existence. They were the outcome of a movement some time before against the Sultan Abdul Aziz. The object of their founder (Midhat Pasha) was a higher and more substantial one than that of rivalling or parrying the scheme which the Conference had organised. But in consequence of the moment at which they first appeared, there was an inclination to disparage them among the friends of the alternative proposals which that Conference matured, and which the Porte refused to acquiesce in on grounds explained in despatches of January 25th and March 31st, 1877, just before the war was imminent. But the language of the noble Marquess was soon modified on that subject. In 1878 his despatches to Sir Henry Layard, which I have had a recent opportunity of glancing at, admit that the Constitution of 1876 may be at least a partial basis of reforms to be initiated.

But, my Lords, that I may not be too retrospective, I pass at once to the correspondence now before us. The acquittal of Moussa Bey, in itself, sufficed to condemn the institutions under which it happened. The noble Marquess and Sir William White have mingled and accentuated their concurring protests on that subject. But, in order to correct tribunals, you must correct the power which underlies them. It is the great lesson of our history. The Revolution of 1688 was

marvellous in its effects on justice. You would have had no Sir John Holt (Lord Chief Justice) if you had had no Prince of Orange. Beyond that, if nothing is now done, a brilliant opportunity to recover influence will be abandoned. The power which comes forward to revive the Ottoman Assemblies will have in some degree the credit of establishing them. In different regions—in Armenia, in Albania, in Asia Minor, Syria, and Kurdistan—the divided races would combine to exult in its design and welcome its initiative. It cannot be denied—indeed, Her Majesty's Government have frequently admitted—that the Conference of 1876, the war of 1877, the turn of subsequent events, have deeply compromised our influence. The aim would be by some new method to restore it to the elevation which it reached after the events of the Crimea. If Great Britain cannot be hailed as a defending, she may yet be cherished as a liberating Power in all the regions I have mentioned.

But here it should not be forgotten, if that mode of looking at the subject is correct, that the opportunity may be a very transient one. There is a series of contingencies which might entirely withdraw it. The Sultan may himself determine to restore the Ottoman Assemblies, under a secret influence too difficult to analyse. An insurrection might arise, like that of the Softas in 1876, to call for these Assemblies, or to suggest the policy of granting them. A Grand Vizier, anxious to stamp his name or benefit his country, might resolve to tread in the now abandoned path of Midhat Pasha. Some calculating Power might desire to recover over these Assemblies the influence to which the Polish Diets used to be subject. It is only now that Great Britain can secure priority, ascendancy and gratitude by moving. It will not be denied that many methods would be open. The Armenian movement, which is not, as far as I know, yet extinguished, might easily be utilised. The British Embassy, of course,

may well be called into activity. If all other methods fail, a special mission might be easily defended. No doubt the chances of succeeding may not be equal to the risk of failing. It is not easy to persuade an arbitrary sovereign to share his power with representatives; but, come what may, there must be yet advantage to Great Britain. If the Assemblies are restored, a British object is arrived at. If a deaf ear is offered to well-supported admonition, we should be less firmly bound by obligations which now weigh upon us; we should be more entitled to enter upon other lines, to contemplate experiments which policy suggests, but honour would not sanction at this moment. Her Majesty's Government, I think, are able to concur with me that, before you contemplate a new system on the Bosphorus, before you overthrow the landmark which the fall of the Byzantine Empire created, you are bound to give the Ottoman dominion, which, through so many wonderful vicissitudes, has endured four hundred years, the latest prospect of surviving.

In urging—as I do only, however, subject to the light which further correspondence throws upon the subject—the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies, I am not blind in any manner to the merits which belong to the existing ruler of the Ottoman Empire. His zeal and industry are universally acknowledged. His liberality to the Armenian prisoners has recommended him to Europe. It is enough, perhaps, if we admit there is no one else to whom despotic power could be so prudently entrusted.

And here I cannot help remarking that there is a chain, a succession of authorities presiding over the Ottoman Empire, who have all been genuine reformers in design, but all oppressed and thwarted by malignant obstacles around them. Sultan Mahmoud, if I am not entirely deceived, was inclined to many salutary measures besides the war which he conducted against the Janissaries, and with which his

name has been conspicuously identified. Abdul Medjid, who immediately succeeded him in 1839, promulgated most excellent decrees, including that of Gulhané, which was famous, in order to create a new departure in the Empire. Abdul Aziz, who succeeded him, I think in 1862, was for many years looked upon as a champion of improvement in that respect, and was welcomed as such in this country, in this capital. His melancholy end may be remembered by your Lordships.

The fact is that, as regards the autocratic system in that country, bad rulers are insufficient to condemn it. It is by good rulers that its inherent vices must be stigmatised. When you have men like Nero and Domitian, their characters may be the mainspring of abuses which betray themselves. It is far graver that a system is incurable when men like Trajan and the Antonines direct it. The strongest argument against autocracy in Turkey, and the most difficult to answer, is that during half a century the greatest minds, greatest virtues, when placed upon the throne, have not been able to redeem it.

My Lords, as I think the Government intend to produce some further correspondence, there will not, I trust, be any technical objection to the Motion now submitted to your Lordships.

After the debate,

As the noble Marquess is so good as to assent to the Motion, I have no wish further to detain the House; but I think that, considering the great importance that attaches to his language, it ought to be remarked that when we disclaim all responsibility for what goes on in that distant country we entirely forget that the established policy of Great Britain, of which the noble Marquess is but a passing organ, has been

to insist upon Ottoman reforms, upon Ottoman improvements, and actively to protest against all abuses in the administration of that Empire. If it can be reasonably established that such a mode of acting is thoroughly exhausted, and has irrevocably failed, it must be rational and politic to attempt the sole alternative which offers itself.



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